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Essays on Status Perceptions in the Workplace

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ESSAYS ON STATUS PERCEPTIONS IN THE WORKPLACE

Juanita Forrester

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

Of

Doctor of Philosophy

In the Robinson College of Business

Of

Georgia State University

GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY

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ACCEPTANCE

This dissertation was prepared under the direction of Juanita Forrester's Dissertation Committee. It has been approved and accepted by all members of that committee, and it has been accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Business Administration in the J. Mack Robinson College of Business of Georgia State University.

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ABSTRACT

Essays on Status Perceptions within the Workplace

By

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December, 2017

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Status, or a person's ranking within a hierarchy, is a core organizing principle for social dynamics within the workplace. Those with high status receive a broad range of social, material, and psychological privileges by virtue of their social standing. For example, status is linked to high levels of social attention, including interest and respect from others, material rewards in the form salary and bonuses, and psychological benefits including autonomy, control, and well-being (Anderson & Kilduff, 2009). For these reasons, the question of why and how status is ascribed and the behaviors that follow these arrangements are of critical importance to people and groups within organizations.

This work focuses on exploring the perceptual nature of status. Across three essays, I explore where status perceptions come from and the processes that influence whether status assignments create or disrupt social harmony. First, I present a theoretical discussion of the possible sources and outcomes of status disagreement. Next, I explain how individual-level differences in ideology may lead to divergent patterns in the way that people strive for status, assign status to others, and make status-based inferences. Finally, I examine how situational

factors influence how well actors in high and low status roles work with others to achieve collaborative or competitive goals. Below, I provide a more specific overview of each of these three essays.

The first essay focuses specifically on the phenomenon of status disagreement (Kilduff et al., 2016), or instances when people disagree about who belongs at the top and bottom of a status hierarchy. While we have reason to believe that status disagreement is a common real-world occurrence, our understanding of the origins of this concept and its consequences is only beginning to emerge. This work makes two main contributions to existing knowledge. First, this essay expands our consideration of the sources of status disagreement by illustrating the potential for variation within three overlapping conceptual dimensions: personal motives, information, ideals. Second, this work broadens the range of possible consequences that might emerge from status disagreement, outlining the potential for both group-level and individual-level outcomes.

The second essay focuses on ideology as an individual-level difference that leads to variation in how people strive to attain status, ascribe status to others, and make inferences about the value of others' contributions. I propose that those who are high on social dominance orientation, or hierarchy-enhancing beliefs that support hierarchy and inequality, are more likely to value behaviors that signal competence. In contrast, those who are low on social dominance orientation, or hierarchy-attenuating beliefs that support equality and the distribution of opportunity, are more likely to value behaviors that signals warmth. These processes have important implications for foundational workplace practices, including recruitment, selection and performance appraisals.

In the third essay, I explore how status may derive its meaning from situational characteristics that encourage competitive or collaborative goals. Whereas most of our current

knowledge on status hierarchies suggests that high status actors work best with low status partners, I suggest that two high status actors can develop effective synergies when they are prompted to focus on shared goals. That is, collaborative settings may simultaneously allow high status actors to leverage the psychological benefits of self-perceived status beliefs while also reducing feelings of threat that decrease shared performance. This work adds nuance to prior findings by illuminating situational contingencies that influence status-based interactions.

Together, these essays suggest that status is in the eye of the beholder. Status arrangements are not always the subject of shared consensus, but may also be the topic of perceptual differences. Moreover, situational characteristics may influence how status is enacted via behaviors. This work takes steps to unpack common theoretical assumptions regarding shared information, ideals, and self-interest. In doing so, I hope to illustrate that variation in the way in which status is perceived, achieved, and enacted has important implications for a range of workplace processes.

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ESSAY ONE

SOURCES AND CONSEQUENCES OF STATUS DISAGREEMENT

We all develop beliefs about ourselves and the people around us in order to help us interpret our place in the social world. Of these beliefs, social status represents one of the most meaningful indicators of our value to others and greater society. Status, or a person's relative position within a social hierarchy, refers to inequality based on differences in honor, esteem, and respect (Ridgeway, 2014). Those who possess status experience a wide range of social, material, and psychological benefits by virtue of their standing relative to others. In the workplace, high status is associated with social attention in the form of deference from others, access to material resources such as superior pay, and psychological rewards including high levels of autonomy, control, and well being (Anderson & Kilduff, 2009). Yet, both researchers and practitioners tend to assume that status is a static, universal outcome of social consensus, rather than a dynamic construct that is often the subject of conflict and disagreement. I propose that status disagreements, or occurrences when people have perceptual disagreements about their place and the place of others within a status hierarchy, are more common than previously assumed. Further, this work outlines the potential sources of status disagreement within the workplace and examines the consequences for people and organizations.

Status is commonly defined as the level of prominence, respect, and influence commanded by an individual in the eyes of others (Anderson & Kilduff, 2002). In other words, status is viewed as a positional indicator of a person's ranking within a particular social context (Ridgeway, 2014). Whereas researchers have been careful to highlight that status is by definition assigned by others, fewer studies have focused on how this process and its conclusions might be perceived by the focal person. This has led to many researchers overlooking the importance of how people see themselves and the extent to which this evaluation corresponds with the opinions

of others. That is, how do people formulate meta-perceptions about how they are viewed within a social context? The distinction between how people view themselves and how they are viewed by others and the space in between these perspectives is of critical importance, since people act upon their own perceptions but are subject, for better or worse, to the perceptions of their interaction partners. Further, there are at least two intriguing scenarios that sprout from a comparison of individuals' beliefs about how they *actually* perceived by others and how they *should* be perceived by others in terms of their ranking within a social hierarchy. For instance, what happens when people are accurate about others' perceptions, but believe that they deserve higher levels of respect than they are given? Further, what happens when people are inaccurate about how they are viewed, and overestimate the level of respect, prominence, and influence endowed upon them by social partners? Here, we refer to these possibilities as incidences of status disagreement.

With few exceptions, workplace research depicts the formation of social status hierarchies as systematically constructed (Berger et al., 1972; 1980), self-perpetuating and stable (Anderson et al. 2001; Magee & Galinsky, 2008). According to this view, status hierarchies emerge from a process wherein all members reach agreement as to who is most and least deserving of status and arrange themselves accordingly. Further, it is typically assumed that status hierarchies are stable in that those with high status are recognized as such by all, successfully claiming associated benefits in a universal manner. More recently, work has emerged that challenges this assumption, portraying status as a competition for dominance and power (Bendersky & Hays, 2012. Kilduff, Willer & Anderson, 2016). By elucidating how employees are motivated to climb the social ladder in order to reap relevant rewards (Anderson & Kilduff, 2010), such work underscores the importance of examining status as a domain of

conflict. Thus, while we are beginning to understand the frequency of divergent perceptions of status (Kilduff, Willer, & Anderson, 2016), we still know relatively little about the origins of status disagreement or the conditions that fuel its growth. If we are to assume that status is sometimes located at the center of social battle, we should benefit from an improved theoretical understanding as to *why* disagreement arises and in turn, *how* it sparks a range of work-related consequences for those involved. This work demonstrates how casting status as a context-driven process of subjective evaluation (e.g., Jensen et al., 2011; Podolny, 1993; Stewart, 2005) allows us to anticipate the divergence of group beliefs regarding the social hierarchy.

There are a number of reasons why it is important to advance our understanding of status as an unstable, dynamic construct arising from subjective evaluations. Our treatment of status as globally understood and recognized may lead us to make inaccurate predictions about how people react (or fail to react) to status. That is, we may overestimate the reach of status understandings and the benefits conferred to those who are considered high status in certain contexts, but not all. More specifically, we may overlook the extent to which status resides in the realm of subjective evaluations and individual beliefs that may or may not be shared or transferred to others. Further, by assuming that status is accepted and recognized by all, we run the risk of oversimplifying the dynamic between people's self-evaluations and their judgments of others. In other words, we fail to account for the *relational* nature of status effects, and overlook the importance of subjective evaluative processes that are necessary to facilitate status-driven outcomes. That is, by not fully appreciating the mechanisms that underlie status, we may mistakenly adapt a narrow, or worse, imprecise understanding of who achieves status, who maintains status, and how or when status is recognized or ascribed by others.

This work focuses on the phenomenon of status disagreement, or incidences where people

have differing opinions about their respective positions within a social hierarchy. I begin by reviewing relevant organizational research on status hierarchies and the smaller body of emerging studies that have begun to challenge existing assumptions about status consensus. Next, I demonstrate how this work can be linked to three primary sources of status disagreement: 1) personal motives 2) information and 3) ideals In doing so, I attempt to identify the qualities that are expected to increase or decrease the probability of these effects. Finally, I present propositions that outline the likely consequences of status disagreement.

The emergence of status hierarchies within groups

In order to delve into the possibilities of perceptual asymmetry in regard to status, it is useful to consider the emergence of status by revisiting early understandings of the origins and functions of hierarchy. Throughout time, social science research has repeatedly demonstrated that status hierarchies emerge in all human social environments (Gruenfeld & Tiedens, 2010). Further, when status is not formally assigned, orderings will still emerge, even when there is no obvious differentiation between individuals (Bales, 1950; Fiske & Ofshe, 1970). Thus, it appears that humans have a natural tendency to organize themselves into a hierarchal structure (Tiedens & Fragale, 2003).

While status orderings are believed to be a fundamental aspect of human life, the goals for hierarchy and mechanisms by which status emerges tend to be varied and complex. For this reason, more than one theoretical perspective has been presented to explain the origin and purpose of status hierarchies. This work clusters around two predominant views: the functional perspective and the dominance perspective. By and large, the functional perspective has been the most influential view to organizational research, demonstrating the value and utility of status for groups (Anderson et al., 2006; Blau, 1964; Berger et al., 1980; Gruenfeld & Tiedens, 2010;

Magee & Galinsky, 2008). Another important but less studied view, sometimes referred to as the dominance perspective, focuses on the motives and behaviors individuals use to obtain status.

The functional perspective (or rational perspective) has long been the prevailing theoretical lens to understanding status hierarchy within organizational behavior (Bavelas, 1960), psychology (Thibault & Kelley, 1959), sociology (Davis & Moore, 1945) and economics (Frank, 1985). Research in this tradition relies on the assumption that status differentiation is mainly a smooth, peaceful, cooperative process (Berger, Zelditch, & Cohen, 1972; Ridgeway, 1987). According to this view, once group members assess the amount of relative value provided by each person, everyone is assigned status and members organize themselves accordingly. In other words, group members are thought to develop an implicit consensus as to which individual characteristics are valuable and allocate status assignments based on the extent to which individuals demonstrate these attributes (Berger, et al., 1972). It is further assumed that the status beliefs of group members reach a point of equilibrium and ultimate consensus. In this way, the purpose of status hierarchies is to create efficiencies and synergies that drive and sustain optimal group performance.

Since groups include members who may or may not agree on particular goals, the best strategies to pursue these goals, or how to execute certain tasks towards these goals, the more specific functions of status hierarchy include 1) easing collective decision-making (e.g., Cartwright & Zander, 1953; Levine & Moreland, 1990; Van Vugt et al., 2008), 2) coordinating individual behavior so that members work towards increasing the quality of group process and outputs (Blau & Scott, 1962; Cartwright & Zander, 1953) and 3) motivating group members to contribute by providing status-related incentives (e.g., Kerr & Tindale, 2004; Willer, 2009).

First, status hierarchies are thought to aid in collective decision-making by giving disproportionate control to one or a few members (Van Vugt et al., 2008). Status hierarchies are expected to increase the quality of group decisions since individuals with high status are those who are seen as most competent, and thus, should be the most capable of making sound decisions on behalf of the group. In functional hierarchies, high status members are presumed to have the most knowledge and expertise. Indeed, a number of studies have shown that groups tend to give status to individuals who demonstrate superior abilities (for reviews, see Bass, 1981; Driskell & Mullen, 1990, Anderson, Spataro & Flynn, 2008). Other members recognize this status ordering by showing high status members respect by actively seeking their input, honoring their opinions, and supporting their goals and interests. Status-based interactions are a reflection and re-enactment of these shared group beliefs.

Second, status hierarchies are expected to facilitate coordination by reducing conflict and guiding communication. In a group where all members have conflicting ideas, speak at once, and attempt to direct the behaviors of others, coordination suffers. Status hierarchies solve the problem of “too many cooks in the kitchen” by designating group leaders, who are allowed to direct others’ actions and make final decisions on the group’s behalf, while lower status members are expected to listen and defer to others (Bales et al., 1951; Berger et al., 1980; Keltner et al., 2003). Hierarchies are also thought to provide the structure and direction for information flow. In the prototypical pyramid, information travels up to group leaders, who then integrate this information and make decisions, which in turn, travel down and throughout the hierarchy (Arrow, 1974; Bavelas, 1950; Leavitt, 2005). At the same time, research has produced mixed findings in regard to whether status hierarchies facilitate or hinder group process efficiencies. For example, research has shown that status may also prevent upward

communication when team members remain silent to leaders to avoid negative judgment, blame, or other repercussions (Roberts & O'Reilly, 1974).

Finally, status hierarchies are thought to motivate individuals to contribute to the group by offering social, material, and psychological incentives for those who achieve high status (Blau, 1964; Willer, 2009). Group members who are perceived to provide the most value to the group are rewarded with greater ranking and accompanying respect and admiration, autonomy, power, and social support. For these reasons, recent work has likened the functional perspective of status to the idea of *meritocracy* (Anderson & Kennedy, 2012). For example, high status actors have the freedom and autonomy to make decisions and act in accordance to their own will, in contrast to low status actors who are expected to comply with the decisions of others, and may have less of a say in the work tasks they must complete. Moreover, in the end, those who are high status may assume a greater share of credit for the group's success. Together, such status related rewards are thought to encourage group members to demonstrate their competence and value to the group.

On the other hand, the dominance theory of status hierarchies tends to characterize the process of status allocation as a domain marked by conflict and competition, rather than peace, cooperation, and rational judgment (Henrich & Gil-White, 2001; Lee & Ofshe, 1981; Mazur, 1985). According to this view, members within a given group will pit themselves against each other through demonstrations of assertive and sometimes manipulative behaviors in a battle for status during what is referred to as a dominance contest. Early studies by Mazur and colleagues (1985; Mazur & Booth, 1998) assert that while human hierarchies may be unique in some ways, status hierarchies retain important similarities across all animal species. A critical component of this model is that individual actors within a hierarchy engage in *dominance acts*, or behavior to

signal a claim on status they already possess or intend to take away from others (Mazur, 1989). Among humans, these behaviors typically include gestures such as tall, erect posture, wide stances, assertive facial expressions, or “stare downs” (Cheng et al., 2013, Henrich and Gil-White, 2001, Rosa and Mazur, 1987). In a seminal piece of sociological work, Whyte (1992) focuses on status conflicts among members of street gangs, or what he calls “honor societies.” Some early organizational research follows in this tradition. For example, negotiated order theory argues that social order undergoes a process of constant (re) construction as members battle for status and assess, punish, or reward one another based on the extent to which traits and behaviors meet shared standards of legitimacy (Strauss et al., 1963).

Whereas status may consist of different values across different situations, groups tend to value two main individual level characteristics. First, individuals must appear to possess competencies that are at the core of group’s goals and challenges (Driskell & Mullen, 1990; Ridgeway, 1987). Second, individuals must be evaluated as having collective interests, or be willing to use their capabilities to help others and contribute to the group’s success as a whole (Ridgeway, 1982; Willer, 2009). While the functional perspective explains why groups are concerned with individual competencies, it does not fully account for how individuals reconcile group goals with personal status-based rewards. Nor does it account for status hierarchies that do not reflect competence, as in cases where overconfident but underskilled members are rewarded with status (Anderson, Brion, Moore & Kennedy, 2012). On the other hand, the overt confrontation and aggression portrayed by the dominance perspective is less realistic within work groups, since such displays violate group values and expectations towards collective interests (Ridgeway, 1987).

Further, the tension between these theoretical perspectives spills over into controversy

regarding whether status hierarchies facilitate or hinder group effectiveness. Empirical studies on this topic have produced mixed findings. The ubiquity of status hierarchies is often taken as evidence for its effectiveness for social functioning. Some empirical research supports this view, arguing that hierarchy is especially beneficial for groups with a high level of interdependence (Ronay, Greenaway, Anicich, and Galinsky, 2012). However, other research has found that inequality reduces group functioning and performance. For instance, in cases where group members contribute equally to discussion, we observe improved group performance (Woolley, Chabris, Pentland, Hashmi, & Malone, 2010). Moreover, inequality in pay has been shown to increase organizational turnover (Wade, O'Reilly, & Pollock, 2006), and reduce individual performance in Major League Baseball (Bloom, 1999). Hierarchical differences have also been shown to hamper knowledge sharing, experimentation, and prioritizing shared goals, all of which hinder group learning (Bunderson and Reagans, 2011). This paper will offer an additional explanation, suggesting that these empirical inconsistencies are likely in part due to undetected disagreement among group members as to who should be allocated high versus low status.

What is Status Disagreement?

A modest group of studies provide empirical evidence to support the view that status assignments do not always reach consensus. An early study on group status focused on communication patterns discovered relatively stable inequalities between members in terms of who initiated and received messages, suggesting social consensus (Bales et al., 1951). Yet, a follow up study on explicit measures of individuals' private perceptions found that consensus versus disagreement varied between groups, and thus, had important implications for group functioning (Heinicke and Bales, 1953). Since then, there has been little continued discussion of status disagreement. Instead the focus in this area has been on the emergence of significant

agreement in status perceptions (e.g., Anderson and Kilduff, 2009; Berger et al., 1972, 1980), even though perfect consensus is rare and high levels of group agreement may exist even in cases of disagreement between individuals (Kilduff, Willer & Anderson, 2016).

Additional studies provide indirect support for the notion that status disagreement is common and likely has an important effect on group outcomes. For instance, team members have been shown to have differing perceptions of each other's levels of expertise (Gardner & Kwan, 2012). Further, increasing attention has been placed on perceptual disagreement within groups along dimensions such as conflict (Jehn, Rispens, & Thatcher, 2010) and trust (De Jong & Dirks, 2012). Such disagreement has been linked to a number of significant consequences, such as performance loss, decreases in team commitment, and a withdrawal of contributions (Kilduff et al., 2016). Together, these points suggest that we stand to make important theoretical advances by revisiting our assumption of consensus within work teams.

Moreover, recent research has found that conflict that emerges over status disagreements has an independent effect that is stronger and more detrimental to group performance than other types of conflict, including relationship, process, and task conflict (Bendersky & Hays, 2012). Other studies have focused directly on the individual behavior of those engaged in explicit competition over status. For instance, research focused on Wall Street sell-side equity analysts found that groups including several high-achieving individuals suffered from declines in team performance (Groysberg, Polzer, & Elfenbein, 2012). These studies suggest that when too many individuals within a team perceive themselves as high status, group processes are interrupted and team performance suffers. In other words, overt disagreement diverts energy and effort towards conflict and away from group productivity (Bendersky & Hays, 2012). Whereas these studies rely on the presumption of open and explicit status contests, this work expands the domain of

status disagreement in line with Kilduff and colleagues (2016) to suggest that divergence in individuals' private but uncontested perceptions may be equally detrimental to group functioning. Using the aforementioned studies as a building block for the current research, I elaborate on the specific sources of status disagreement and expand the range of potential consequences for this phenomenon.

According to the functional perspective of status outlined above, status understandings represent a foundational organizing framework for group members. That is, group members rely on their own status understandings to coordinate themselves and interact effectively with each other. In this way, status orderings work to solve the problem of collective decision making, improve the quality of group decisions, and incentivize members to put their best foot forward in response to the promise of status-related rewards. If members within a team attempt to formulate status perceptions about one another and this process does not reach a point of agreement, it stands to reason that groups experience lower levels of effectiveness. This disagreement may happen both within and outside of individuals' awareness, however, in both cases, it is expected that groups will experience an adverse impact on functioning and performance. That is, status disagreement may emerge from the same negative processes it perpetuates: segmented, uncoordinated decision-making, low quality decisions, and independent, or selfish (rather than group motivated) motives. Further, since individuals have a natural inclination to arrange themselves according to a status hierarchy, their attempts at creating order have deeper and more far-reaching implications than other forms of disagreement.

More recently, Kilduff and colleagues (2016) have delineated between three types of status disagreement: 1) *upward disagreement*, which occurs when two group members both believe they rank above the other in a status hierarchy, 2) *downward disagreement*, which occurs when

two group members both believe they rank below the other in the group's hierarchy, and 3) *third-party disagreement*, when two group members disagree about the relative position of one of the other group members (who is uninvolved in the disagreement). Since low status positions are comparatively less desirable, this work argues that upward disagreement is the most prevalent and harmful type of disagreement. Further, disagreement over high status positions is likely to be more detrimental to group functioning, since high status members are assigned greater expectations and responsibilities for the group.

However, there are also particular scenarios that may not be captured by these categories, but should have detrimental effects at both individual and group level analysis. That is, there are likely combinations of both third-party disagreement and upward agreement, or vice versa. Further, downward disagreement may also complicate these effects. For example, Steven might think that she's higher status than both Bob and Charlie, which both Bob and Charlie agree with. She also may think that Bob is higher status than Charlie, which both Bob and Charlie disagree with. These mis-matched perceptions will likely lead to a number of important effects. However, our current theoretical understanding of status disagreement remains unclear about how to account for the combined effects of perceptual asymmetry.

For the purpose of this paper, I will take a broader view to focus on the antecedents, moderators, and outcomes of both dyadic and third-party status disagreement. Since the sources of status disagreement may be varied and complex, it seems most appropriate to revisit our assumptions regarding how status perceptions emerge in the first place and how they are shared within groups in the workplace.

The Potential Sources of Status Disagreement

I propose that status consensus is not as seamless as it may appear, and that status disagreement, incidences where people disagree about their standing and the position of others within a hierarchy, are relatively common. The presumption of status consensus represents several problems. First, there is a common knowledge problem, or the issue that it is impossible for more than one individual to have an identical experience or perception of the world. This problem obstructs the capability of groups to organize themselves on the basis of common understandings. Second, there is the issue of social evaluation, or the subjective process of prioritizing shared goals and values. Members within any given group likely have varying opinions as to how to approach a task, this results in divergent perceptions about which group members' skills are most useful and valuable. Finally, there is the issue of mixed motives. That is, it is likely that certain individuals will strive to attain status within a group, even if others have superior skills that are better suited for group success.

These problems are grouped into three main categories that carry distinct themes but intersect and overlap: 1) *personal motives*, 2) *ideals*, and, 3) *information*. It is proposed that variation among individuals within these categories will lead to the emergence of status disagreement. First, group members do not typically have access to objective information about each other's level of knowledge, skills and abilities. To the extent that individuals are unfamiliar with one another, this means they must rely on superficial cues (e.g., personality perceptions). For example, the quiet behavior of an introverted colleague may be interpreted as a sign of lack of knowledge or things to contribute by some group members, whereas others may have past experience and direct observation of the same introvert's high level of skill and expertise. Second, group members may have varying opinions as to which skills and individual characteristics are most valuable to the group's success. For example, whereas highly tenured

members might believe that seniority is most essential for team productivity, others with industry experience might favor specialized knowledge. Finally, since status is associated with certain benefits, it is likely that some individuals will be motivated to enhance their own contributions while demeaning the value of others in order to secure personal rewards. These behaviors may be convincing to discerning observers but not others, leading to variation in status perceptions.

An integration of social information processing theory and self-serving bias literature allows us to make certain predictions about when status disagreements are most likely to emerge. First, self-serving bias, or the perceptual tendency to hold views that enhance one's self-esteem, helps explain the role of personal motives in formulating status perceptions. Further, according to literature on social information processing, social information influences human judgment, thought, and action when the information is clear and easy to understand (Daft & Lengel, 1984; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986), the salience and visibility of the information is high (Fiske, Kenny, & Taylor, 1982), and the information is credible. I argue that situational features often determine the clarity and visibility of information, whereas the credibility of information is determined through a valuation process related to certain ideals.

Personal Motives

The desire for status is an important human motive (Anderson, Hildreth & Howland, 2015). As a representation of a person's position within a social ranking system, social status is a meaningful benchmark people use to evaluate their own self-worth and social esteem. Further, a well-established tenet in our understanding of human behavior is that people are fundamentally motivated by self-interest (Schwartz, 1987). In many organizational settings, status comes with a range of benefits, including instrumental rewards such as promotions, interpersonal rewards such as deference, or image-based rewards such as prestige (Anderson & Kilduff, 2009). To the extent

that individuals believe they deserve such rewards or see an opportunity to make a claim to valuable resources, they are expected to be motivated to compete to secure a position at the top of the status hierarchy. I discuss how individual characteristics such as dominance, cultural values such as individualism, and situational factors such as competition are each expected to amplify self-interest and increase the likelihood that individuals may misperceive their social standing or act in a way that causes disagreement in the eyes of others.

A substantial body of work on motivated perception (e.g., Kunda, 1990, Taylor & Brown, 1988), suggests that certain individuals may have a tendency to perceive themselves as higher in status than others. In other words, such individuals might possess inflated perceptions of the value of their own characteristics, skills, and knowledge as a result of self-serving biases. It follows that they may be more attentive to their own contributions to the group, and value their own work above others (Epley et al., 2000). Empirical evidence supports this view, with studies showing that individuals sometimes inflate the importance of their specific attributes to attain higher status (Owens & Sutton, 2012). For example, a group member may announce and frame the group needs according to what they believe is their strongest asset. Building on past findings, I describe how particular individual traits are closely linked to status striving motives. Next, I discuss the less explored but likely possibility that situational characteristics may also fuel this psychological mechanism.

Dominance. High levels of dominance within a group are likely to strengthen the relationship between self-interest and status disagreement. When individuals are high on trait dominance, they are more likely to think and act in self-interested ways. That is, trait dominance makes individuals more vulnerable to self-serving biases. In turn, this is likely to lead to status disagreement, or cases when individuals within a dyad both think of themselves as higher status

than the other. Studies have repeatedly found that individual characteristics are related to status striving behaviors. A cumulative analysis of 85 years of research shows that the personality trait dominance is the strongest predictor of who emerges as a leader within a group, above any other individual factor taken into consideration, including intelligence (Cummins, 2015). Trait dominance is explained as a preference for having authority over others and a tendency towards assertive behavior. In one study, individuals who scored high on dominance were rated as more competent by their teammates, which led them to be assigned higher relative status and influence compared to others (Anderson & Kilduff, 2009). Notably, this effect occurred despite the fact that dominant individuals were actually no more competent than less dominant others, as evinced by standardized test scores and performance on group tasks. This effect was determined to occur based on the increased confidence conveyed by dominant individuals through behaviors such as taking the initiative to actively suggest answers and volunteering information believed to be relevant to problem solving tasks (Anderson & Kilduff, 2009). More recently, Kilduff and colleagues (2016) have demonstrated a link between dominance and status disagreement. However, missing from existing research is an account of what happens when several members of a group are high on dominance. That is, we are uncertain as to whether or not dominance itself creates status disagreement, or if it is *configural* dominance that leads to perceptual variation. I posit that the higher the levels of dominance within a group, the more individuals will be engaged in status striving, which will ultimately create high levels of group-level status disagreement.

Proposition 1a: The level of individual trait dominance within a group is positively related to group-level status disagreement, such that the greater the number of dominant individuals, the higher the level of status disagreement.

Cultural Orientation. Cultural orientation influences status in many ways. In addition to informing the valuation system used to evaluate and assign status (Torelli et al., 2014), research suggests that the meaning of status is qualitatively different across cultures, with individualists viewing status as a means to advance their own self-interest, and collectivists viewing status as a means through which to support the interests of others (Torelli & Shavitt, 2010). It follows that across cultures, people report different levels of motivation to achieve status and commit effort to making their status known to others.

Whereas individualistic cultures are characterized by independent self-construal and social competition, collectivistic cultures are more likely to nurture ideals and values that relate to interdependence and collaboration. Building on these common understandings of cultural differences, researchers have found that individualists are more likely to integrate status into their own self-concept, whereas collectivists are more likely to see status as a social role. That is, individualists are more likely to attribute their social standing to their own notions of individual superiority. On the other hand, collectivists are more likely to see their status position as a reflection of their responsibility towards others. In this way, they see their status position as having relational rather than personal implications. Since individualists take status rankings more personally than collectivists, it is more likely that status disagreements will arise between two individualists. From a group-level perspective, it follows that the more individualists there are within a group, the greater the number of potential status disagreements.

Proposition 1b: The level of individualism within a group is positively related to group-level status disagreement, such that the greater the number of individualist (vs. collectivist) group members, the higher the level of status disagreement.

Fixed Pie Perceptions. In addition to individual characteristics, situational factors are expected to contribute to the incidence of self-interested motives. It is expected that high levels of perceived competition within a group will strengthen the relationship between self-interest and status disagreement. A cognitive bias that has been explored at length within negotiations literature is the fixed pie bias, or the belief that one's own interests are in direct and absolute opposition to others (De Dreu, Koole, & Steinel, 2000). While it is evident that individuals tend to arrange themselves into similarly structured hierarchies composed of fixed rankings (Anderson, Hildreth, & Howland, 2015), research also suggests that this bias leads to people to lose out on potential integrative gains (Liu, Liu & Zhang, 2016). Further, the cognitive frames, or mental models that people use to approach such situations, are not always fixed, and can even be adjusted into "win-win" cognitive frames (Liu, Liu, Zhang, 2016). I posit when individuals have competitive mindsets, or the perception of "fixed pie" or "winner takes all" structures, an individual may be more inclined to view their value system as diametrically opposed to those whose values seem to differ from their own. From this point of view, the difference between assuming a high and low status position within a hierarchy is high stakes, since the "winner" takes all while leaving nothing for everyone else ("losers"). Thus, individuals will be encouraged to behave in ways that promote their own self-interest and are likely to hold onto views that support this behavior, increasing the likelihood of status disagreement.

From a group-level perspective, it follows that those who adopt "win-win" cognitive frames are less likely to rank themselves more highly than others within a team. Upward status disagreement is defined as incidences when people believe themselves to be higher status than each other. Thus, I predict that the more members who hold "fixed pie" perceptions there are

within a group, the more likely they are to subjectively outrank each other, and thus, create status disagreement.

Proposition 1c: The level of “fixed pie” perceptions within a group is positively related to group-level status disagreement, such that the greater the number of individuals with “fixed pie” perceptions, the higher the level of status disagreement.

Information

An aspect of status evaluations that is less discussed but of critical importance is the fact that people are rarely presented with identical sets of information about their interaction partners or their environment. Moreover, when presented with the same information, people do not always arrive at the same conclusions. Since status orderings are context-driven, individuals’ perceptions of one another are confined to a short, narrow and idiosyncratic history of domain specific behaviors. People also filter information through a subjective lens. For these reasons, I suggest that variation in access to information is a relatively common feature among work groups. Further, this variation in access to information may feed situational ambiguity that ultimately lays the foundation for the emergence of status disagreement.

A necessary precondition for employees to reach consensus about their own and others’ social standing is the recognition and similar interpretation of certain status-based cues. That is, individual status perceptions require that meaningful differences between members of an aggregate be identifiable (Conway, Pizzamiglio, & Mount, 1996; Shils, 1965). The tendency for individuals to seek out and interpret distinct social features as signals of competence and value provides the basis for work on status characteristics theory. Importantly, status characteristics provide cues that may vary to the extent to which they are 1) observable and 2) produce uniform perceptions of competence and value across perceivers. Both aspects may create the potential for

divergent status evaluations among members of the same group (Kilduff, Willer, and Anderson, 2016).

There is ample evidence that people rely on noisy signals of aptitude in order to determine whose ideas or expertise are deserving of deference as the group attempts to accomplish work related tasks (e.g., Barton & Bunderson, 2014; Joshi, 2014; Thomas-Hunt, Ogden & Neale, 2003). Scholars have highlighted that individual demographic attributes, including gender, race, ethnicity, educational background, and tenure, function as status markers that signal competence across a broad range of situational contexts (Shils, 1968). In turn, these characteristics predict the level of respect received from others (Berger, Cohen, & Zelditch, 1972; Bunderson, 2003; Cohen & Zhou, 1991; Ridgeway, 1991). Status characteristics are typically split into two categories: 1) *specific cues*, which include those that are directly related to the task, such as education and tenure, and 2) *diffuse cues*, which are characteristics that have no obvious or direct relevance to the task, but are still believed to convey aptitude in a given domain (Banaji & Prentice, 1994; Jackman, 1994; Jost, Banaji & Nosek, 2004; Ridgeway, 1991). Both diffuse and specific cues operate in a similar manner. While specific cues give direct information about a person's potential aptitude in providing value to the group, diffuse cues give indirect signals, through general expectations of competence, as to whether or a person will make valuable contributions to the group's success (Joshi & Knight, 2015).

Visibility and Clarity of Specific Status Cues. Whereas specific status characteristics (e.g., skills, expertise) are expected to produce more accurate expectations of potential value to group members, they may also be less observable than diffuse cues (e.g., gender, age) (Bunderson and Barton, 2011), and thus, more subject to variation in visibility and clarity (Chaiken & Maheswaran, 1994; Fisher, Ilgen & Hoyer, 1979). There are many examples of potential

variation in access to information brought about by the nature of tasks that may have low or high levels of visibility. In practice, variation in visibility and clarity of specific cues creates status inefficiencies. For instance, we might imagine an employee who is highly competent at a low visibility task such as technical analysis, but less comfortable with a high visibility task such as public speaking. Further, his nervousness might lead him to deliver a clumsy and confusing presentation to colleagues, despite possessing a high level of expertise. In this case, his competence at technical analysis may inspire confidence from group members who are familiar with their competencies, while remaining less accessible as relevant information to others. In another example, a manager at a retail store might make a point to post sales reports ranking employees according to how much revenue they have generated. This should create a high level of visibility around the employee's salesmanship, however, it could be possible that the employee secures sales by being deceptive to customers. Unless return rates and customer satisfaction scores are also posted along with sales rankings, these skill deficiencies are probably less visible to onlookers.

While not directly related to visibility, another source of variation in access to information is disconnected membership and participation across social groups and contexts. In modern workplaces, team membership may shift frequently and employees may be members of multiple teams (O'Leary, Mortensen & Woolley, 2011). Thus, the issue of shifting contexts hinders the growth of familiarity between teammates which would allow them to establish shared perspectives on the task, goals, and each other (Wageman, Gardner, & Mortensen, 2012). The fact that people may have membership in contexts where individuals' skills are highlighted influences their level of familiarity and distance from one another. For instance, legal and medical professionals have been shown to have very different relative standings in the eyes of

“insiders” versus “outsiders” of their career networks (Abbott, 1981). In another example, an immigrant may have high social standing in their country of origin, but lower comparative status in the place where they are resettling. In such cases, status understandings may diverge as the result of access to distal versus proximal cues.

Proposition 2a: The level of visibility of work contributions within a group is negatively related to status disagreement, such that the higher the visibility rating of members' contributions, the lower the level of status disagreement.

A second potential issue arising from specific status characteristics (e.g., skills, expertise) is potential variation in clarity, or ease of understanding. This is further complicated when members of a group have different levels of knowledge and expertise. For example, a person may have highly specialized knowledge that is at the same time invaluable to the group's success. It is possible that certain members will have a knowledge base that is closer to the person in question. In this case, these members might act as intermediaries that are able to assess the value of a team member, however, other members might be more doubtful of this person's value, or even misattribute their skills to a colleague who is better at communication.

Indeed, there is a body of research that examines the elaboration of task-relevant information as a team-level resource (Van Knippenberg et al., 2004). According to this view, elaboration of information includes the exchange and integration of ideas and knowledge relevant to the task. However, since expertise is by definition a specialized level of knowledge and understanding, it may not easily be understood or appreciated by others within a group. It follows that whereas some group members might see the value in a particular skill set, others might have a weaker understanding, and thus, devalue the contributions that they fail to understand. For these reasons, I posit that the clarity of information in the eyes of others is a likely source of status

disagreement.

Proposition 2b: The level of clarity of work contributions within a group is negatively related to status disagreement, such that the higher the group-level clarity ratings of members' contributions, the lower the level of status disagreement.

Visibility of Diffuse Status Cues. In contrast to specific characteristics related to knowledge and expertise, diffuse status characteristics such as age, race and gender, are easily observable. People tend to use cognitive shortcuts to make inferences about others, otherwise referred to as stereotypes. In some cases, these stereotypes are used because of a lack of information, whereas other times, stereotypes assist in the simplification of information. A long history of research on status expectations in small groups has found that certain social characteristics that are imbued with societal value, such as gender and race, influence the contributions of group members as well as the extent to which these contributions are valued (Ridgeway, 1987; Thomas-Hunt et al., 2003). At the societal level, men are generally perceived as having higher levels of competence than women and thus deserving of higher relative status (Ridgeway, 2001). These findings extend to racial differences, as evinced by studies showing that White employees are viewed as more highly effective and are also evaluated as having more leadership potential than non-Whites (Rosette, Phillips, & Leonardelli, 2008). Since diffuse status characteristics tend to be highly observable cues, it is likely that people will rely more heavily on diffuse status characteristics in order to infer the competence and value possessed by group members, especially in ambiguous situations. This possibility is discussed further in later sections related to legitimacy and ideals.

Contextual Ambiguity. While the visibility and clarity of status cues creates transparency and consistency regarding how individuals see themselves and how they are viewed within a

particular social context, situational factors might also interrupt the way that these cues are applied. That is, in contexts that lack objective performance metrics, it may be highly unclear which individual contributions or capabilities are most crucial for success. Whereas some fields are characterized by intangible skills such as knowledge work, others might be marked by rapid change, such as technology. In both cases, it may be difficult to “stay ahead of the curve” as performance standards are often elusive. Similarly, firms or groups may employ multiple strategies in order to manage high levels of uncertainty. For example, the field of higher education is driven by both academic and athletic status rankings (Lifschitz et al., 2011), but it is arguably more difficult to disentangle the specific influence of each. Yet, for schools with high status, both dimensions are typically treated as an opportunity to capitalize on a competitive advantage.

Proposition 2c: The level of contextual ambiguity within a group is positively related to status disagreement, such that the higher the level of group contextual ambiguity, the higher the level of status disagreement.

Differences in information are expected to be especially common in early stages of group formation and highly influential to status orderings. While the functional theory of status hierarchies predicts that groups engage in re-shuffling as they become more familiar with each other’s value and contributions to the group, empirical evidence does not support this view. Instead, studies suggest that status hierarchies are established early and are highly resistant to change, demonstrating a hardening effect (Anderson & Kilduff, 2010). This paper provides an additional perspective to this effect, suggesting that it is people’s subjective *perceptions* of the status hierarchy that develop early and show little signs of adjustment as time goes on. While not always shared with others, these perceptions provide the basis for corresponding behavior. Thus,

it is expected that to the extent that variation in access to information and the interpretation of status cues influences status beliefs during the early stages of group formation, such beliefs are likely to become formative as the group reaches maturity. Thus, it is expected that the effects of differential access to information are especially common when members are becoming acquainted with one another as members of the same group, and increase in salience as the group reaches maturity.

Based on previous discussion, I expect that status disagreement, or instances wherein two people within a team both perceive themselves as having higher status than the other, are likely to emerge in conditions where there is a high level of variation in access to social information and clarity of social information. Unsurprisingly, low levels of familiarity and clarity regarding others' skill set within a group is expected to create a moderate level of status disagreement due to increased ambiguity. However, this effect should be significantly exacerbated by group variation, wherein some group members have high levels of familiarity or clarity, and other group members report relatively low levels of these constructs.

Ideals

While the problem of common knowledge is one hurdle, it is not the only issue that hinders status consensus. Even if individual members have access to a similar set of information and reach a common understanding, they may develop inconsistent interpretations as to the priority of each others' skill set, and thus, have conflicting views as to whose skills provide the group the highest level of *value*. Unlike the issue of access to information that is clear and easy to understand, this scenario involves differing opinions as to the *type* of skills and contributions that should be prioritized in order to achieve group success. It follows that disagreement of this kind will lead to dissensus regarding who belongs at the top and bottom of the social hierarchy.

Here, I refer to conflicting opinions regarding which dimensions should be used to assign status as variation in valuation criteria, or *subjective ideals*. Since the issue of conflicting ideals emerges from social interaction, these propositions are expected to occur at the group level.

Heterogeneity. There are a number of reasons why people within the same group might have differing opinions about which skills or competencies are most important for group performance. Building on prior research, I suggest that highly diverse groups, comprised of members from different backgrounds, experiences, and skill sets are likely to develop unique value systems. In particular, I argue that teams characterized by high levels of within-group dissimilarity are likely to possess divergent beliefs about which behaviors and characteristics help fuel group processes and ultimately lead to high performance outcomes (Van Knippenberg, De Dreu, & Homan, 2004; Kirkman & Shapiro, 2005). In order to illuminate the role of heterogeneity in the formulation of divergent *status evaluations*, I will turn to a discussion of legitimacy.

Legitimacy. As previously discussed, social information processing theory posits that social information is most influential not only when information is observable and clear, but also when the information is credible (Daft & Lengel, 1984; Chaiken & Maheswaran, 1994; Fisher, Ilgen & Hoyer, 1979). At the intersection of external information and internal values, is the socio-cognitive process that involves an assessment of credibility, or validity, between the two. In order to elaborate on the credibility criteria, it is useful to refer to the broad literature on legitimacy (Ridgeway, 2001). Within the sociological tradition, legitimacy is a term used to describe how actors are evaluated based on their consistency with cultural beliefs, norms, and values. This evaluative process includes both a 1) cognitive dimension that construes actors based on valid, seemingly objective, characteristics, and a 2) prescriptive component that

consists of whether an actor's characteristics or behavior is perceived as morally right. Most of the research in this area focuses on explaining why demographic characteristics are associated with status expectations that vary for members of different groups (Johnson et al., 2006; Ridgeway, 2001). It is posited here that a high level of heterogeneity within groups is associated with the enactment of different schemas of legitimacy, and thus, is likely to create status disagreement.

There is plenty of evidence to suggest that heterogeneity in members' status characteristics will spur differences in the amount of value and influence members' are assumed to possess within groups (Johnson et al., 2006). More specifically, group members with diffuse status advantages (e.g., White men) are more likely to become assertive and influential in decisions and become leaders than members with diffuse status disadvantages (e.g., Black women) (Johnson et al., 2006). Yet this consequence is inefficient since members who are status advantaged are not always the same members who are in fact more competent and influential (Weber & Foschi, 1988, Wagner & Berger, 2002). Of course, exceptions exist when women or minority employees become leaders as a result of other characteristics related to performance expectations, such as seniority or expertise. However, studies show that those whose status characteristics are inconsistent with these titles are more likely to face resistance from subordinates (e.g., Eagly & Karau, 2002). In this case, widespread status-related beliefs created at the societal level have accumulated comparatively higher levels of cultural support (i.e., authorization and endorsement) for those with diffuse status advantages in comparison to those with diffuse status disadvantages (Cornell & Ridgeway, 2003). Typically, individuals such as these find themselves with weaker levels of within-group endorsement and normative expectations for compliance.

It follows that heterogeneous groups are more likely to include individuals whose diffuse status characteristics (e.g., gender, race) are incongruent with their specific status characteristics (e.g., skills and expertise). That is, diverse groups are likely to include members with high levels of competence and expertise but are status disadvantaged according to greater society. Since diffuse status characteristics are more observable than the latter, however, it is likely that some group members may mistakenly rely on these cues in order to assign colleagues' with lower relative status. At the same time, it is possible that status disadvantaged individuals may demonstrate their skills while onlookers discount their competencies due to cognitively perceived invalidity (e.g., Eagley & Karau, 2002).

Further, there is evidence that cultural values influence how people perceive status. This work has direct implications for variation for the prescriptive component of legitimacy, or the extent to which status is associated with what is morally right. For example, whereas those from individualistic cultures have been shown to value demonstrations of competence and dominance, those from collectivist cultures tend to value displays of helping and generosity (Torelli et al., 2014). In one study, Americans were less likely than Polish individuals to comply with a request from a leader with low competence, whereas Polish individuals were less likely to comply with a request from a leader without relational skills (Wosinska, et al., 2009; see Leslie and Gelfand, 2011 for a review of similar findings). This suggests that individuals evaluate, recognize, and react to the status of others based on a set of values that varies between individuals. I predict that differences in ideals within a group are applied according to two primary dimensions of evaluative legitimacy, including prescriptive and cognitive lenses.

Proposition 3a: The level of heterogeneity within a group in terms of both personal and skill-based characteristics is positively related to status disagreement, such that the

higher the level of heterogeneity, the higher the level of status disagreement. .

Proposition 3b: The level of evaluative legitimacy of others' skills within a group is negatively related to status disagreement, such that the higher the level of evaluative legitimacy, the lower the level of status disagreement.

The topic of status disagreement is just beginning to emerge as a possibility within work groups. However, the previous discussion suggests that it is a characteristic that is likely frequently overlooked, as illustrated by the fact that potential drivers are varied and wide-ranging. I have grouped the origins of status disagreement into three primary dimensions that are expected to vary in the degree to which they are shared: information, ideals, and self-interest. These dimensions are conceptualized as closely related but distinct approaches to the phenomenon of status disagreement. Further, while this work is meant to provide an overview of likely effects, it is possible that there are additional sources of status disagreement that have not yet been considered.

The Consequences of Status Disagreement

The concept of status disagreement in and of itself departs from our traditional understanding of status hierarchy. As such, it is a construct that has escaped the attention of most researchers, but necessarily influences the dynamics and consequences of status within workgroups and organizations. While status disagreement within groups may sometimes remain undetected, I argue that it nonetheless produces important consequences for individuals and workgroups. In the following sections, I will outline how perceptual status disagreement may spur a series of negative experiences for individuals that likely interrupt the development and maintenance of group processes and ultimately diminish group performance.

As mentioned, we are only beginning to understand the occurrence and outcomes of status disagreement. While certain scholars have shown that explicit team disagreement over status diverts energy and effort towards conflict and away from group productivity (Bendersky & Hays, 2012; Groysenber, Polzer & Elfenbein, 2012), more recent work suggests that private status disagreement operates instead through another mechanism: reduced motivation (Kilduff et al., 2016). In turn, this decline in motivation leads to withdrawal of contributions and reduced group performance. These studies suggest that when too many individuals within a group perceive themselves as high status, group processes are interrupted and performance suffers. While such studies offer important findings for our treatment of status disagreement, they do not elaborate on the specific reasons *why* group members lose motivation or choose to engage in conflict. Further, scholars have only recently begun to move beyond the presumption of open and explicit status contests to explore the effects of perceptions of status that might diverge privately (Kilduff et al., 2016). The present work will attempt to add precision and robustness to extant findings by suggesting that private status disagreement likely leads to a broad range of psychological and affective states, with a complex range of consequences for individuals and groups.

Individual Outcomes

While high status appears to be tied to lower levels of baseline levels of negative affect and stress, those who see themselves as high status also tend to respond to acute status threats more intensely than others (Gruenfeld & Tiedens, 2010). For example, in an experiment where high status participants were asked to complete challenging speech and arithmetic tasks in front of an audience, they found that those who had higher self-reported levels of status (reported being more “respected”, “esteemed,” and “admired” than others) had the most elevated levels of

physiological stress response to this task and perceived social evaluative threat (Gruenfeld & Tiedens, 2010). One explanation for this effect is that those who see themselves as high status tend to place higher value on this hierarchical position than others. In another example, when Blader and Chen (2012) randomly assigned participants to a high status negotiation role, participants became increasingly concerned with whether or not their negotiation partner treated them with respect. Pettit, Yong, and Sparro (2010) also conclude that people are more concerned with losing status than possible gains to status. These findings suggest that those who perceive themselves as high status hold certain standards and expectations that others recognize them as such. When these expectations are not met, as is predicted in the case of status disagreement, I argue that individuals are more likely to experience feelings of threat and low levels of control.

Status orderings guide patterns of behavioral interaction at a micro-level, such that higher status individuals are shown signs of deference and respect. However, in cases of status disagreement, wherein two individuals both perceive themselves to be higher status than the other, individuals' expectations for how others should treat them are likely unmet. That is, a person who views themselves as high status may find that their interaction partners withhold acts of deference, failing to treat them in the way they feel they deserve. These interaction patterns might include behaviors such as ignoring their suggestions, interrupting or challenging their opinion, offering unsolicited guidance, or failing to acknowledge or praise their contributions. At a basic level, incongruence between a person's self-views and how their colleagues perceive them can negatively affect one's feelings of coherence and control (Polzer, Milton & Swann, 2002). Conflicting status expectations should exacerbate this effect, as evinced by research on dominance complementarity, which finds that people are most comfortable with interaction partners who complement, rather than mimic, their levels of dominance behavior (Tiedens and

Fragale, 2003, Tiedens et al., 2007). In addition to the discomfort of a one-time offense, the fact that interaction partners have differing perceptions of one another's status suggests that a dynamic of conflicting expectations may become a frequent, if not normative aspect of the relationship.

Proposition 4a: Status disagreement is positively related to individual perceptions of personal threat.

Further, individuals who perceive their own relative value and contributions as relatively higher than others, but do not experience dyadic affirmations of this view are likely uncertain of their role within the group. Role ambiguity occurs when an individual does not understand his or her responsibilities and goals for the job (Sawyer, 1992). A common version of role ambiguity arises when individuals are uncertain of their boundaries, leading to anxiety. For example, a person might consider herself to be an expert on a given topic, but find that certain group members do not follow their guidance on a relevant task. Not only will this experience be threatening to self-perceptions of status, but it will also challenge how a person categorizes his or her unique contribution to others. This is expected to lead to role ambiguity, and a perceived lack of control over the behavior of others and their future within the workplace (Ashford et al., 1989). Moreover, this experience of role ambiguity as an outcome of status disagreement is unique from other forms of role conflict in that status disagreement necessarily involves the perceived value and worth of an individual in the eyes of his or her teammates. In this way, conflict and ambiguity does not arise from differences alone, but also from the way in which individuals value these differences. Further, judgements of this type involve a person making self-evaluations in relation to others. That is, a person may believe that they are high status, and this belief by definition might imply that they perceive others as low status, or beneath them. In

instances of disagreement, it follows that this personal belief of worth may remain unvalidated by the actions, values, and behaviors of others.

Proposition 4b: Status disagreement is positively related to individual perceptions of role ambiguity.

Proposition 4c: Status disagreement is negatively related to individual perceptions of control.

Beyond the experience of personal offense, research from the justice literature suggests that individuals attend to fairness and justice information in order to affirm their value and belonging to the group. In instances where group members feel disrespected by their peers, they may retaliate. This retaliation can be overt, as when members engage in open challenges or attacks against one another (Bendersky and Hays, 2012). However, retaliation may also take on a more subtle form, as when members withhold task contributions and become unwilling to comply with collective goals (Kilduff et al., 2016). In both cases, it is expected that the feelings of group commitment will decline since members' expectations are unmet or violated through social interactions. Groups perform at their peak level when all involved behave as members of a group, rather than as distinct individuals (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher & Wetherell, 1987). However, if group members receive social information that they feel violates their own perceptions of self-concept, they will engage in either individualist or collective coping strategies. In the case of status disagreement, since people rate themselves more highly than at least one another group member, it is expected that this experience will lead to lower levels of group identification.

Proposition 4d: Status disagreement is negatively related to individual perceptions of group identification.

Group Outcomes

Status disagreements have unique implications for groups, since they necessarily implicate all members of a given hierarchy. Holding the behavior of other group members equal, if two members of a group both perceive themselves as having higher status than the other, they may read the behavior of the other person as a potential threat to their position. Thus, they may be more likely to engage in self-interested behaviors in order to preserve their own perception of self-dignity and stature, even to the detriment of the group. A handful of studies have suggested that explicit status disagreements inhibit group functioning in at least one critical manner, that is, the reduction of information sharing (Bendersky & Hays, 2012). Group members engaged in status disagreements tend to withdraw their contributions to the team, which in turn, reduces team performance (Kilduff & Anderson, 2016). Thus, status disagreements can be harmful not only for those directly involved, but other group members as well.

There are a few potential ways that status disagreement might hamper group level outcomes. A closely related stream of research on transactional memory systems suggests that individuals within a group function best when they are aware of each other's potential and actual skill set and contributions to group tasks (Wegner, 1987; Brandon & Hollingshead, 2004). However, status understandings move beyond the location of differences since status is an indicator of personal worth and value relative to others within a given team. Indeed, scholars have theoretically and empirically demonstrated that disputes over status have a stronger negative impact on the group than task, relationship, or process conflicts, since they have long term implications, include the participation of bystanders and allies, and involve distributive outcomes, or win-lose situations (Bendersky & Hays, 2011). First, research on both role theory and status hierarchies suggests that patterns of interaction based on status differentiations are

cumulative, and past dynamics are likely to set the tone for future behaviors. For example, if Jack interrupts Steven and effectively silences his contribution, or takes credit for his idea and is acknowledged by other group members, it is likely that in the future, the group will solicit the opinion of Jack before they ask Steven to contribute. However, if Steven perceives his status to be higher than Jack then he may challenge his contributions rather than defer to him. Further, according to the functional perspective, status hierarchies serve the purpose of organizing members in a way that facilitates efficient information and communication flows, since certain members are expected to give direction while others carry out orders. However, if multiple members are demonstrating leadership behaviors, by directing the tasks of others and overseeing the quality of their performance, then other group members may become uncertain as to whose advice to prioritize, leading to inconsistencies and process loss.

Further, the occurrence of status disagreements implies that certain members will not receive the deference and respect they feel entitled to, which should lead to cumulative feelings of threat, stress, and intra-group defensiveness that will likely prevent them from positively contributing to the group. For example, employees who feel they are higher status others may discount other members' contributions even when they are valid. In addition, if an employee undergoes feelings of constant threat due to a lack of deference from one or more other group members, they may become more focused on boosting their superior image in the eyes of others and less focused on ways to create actual value.

Proposition 5a: Status disagreement is negatively associated with group coordination.

Proposition 5b: Status disagreement is negatively associated with group process gains.

Proposition 5b: Status disagreement is negatively associated with group performance.

The purpose of this paper was to build on recent discussions around perceptual disagreement within groups and illuminate the various potential sources of status disagreement. This discussion was organized around three main sources of status disagreement, including variation within groups in information, ideals, and self-interest. Each of these categories represents particular salient aspects of status emergence, while highlighting the possibility of perceptual disagreement. While the traditional approach to status within organizations assumes that status rankings are the result of shared consensus, there are many reasons, outlined here, to question this assumption. A consideration of these dimensions may allow us to predict cases when status hierarchies fail to provide the structure and functioning that is presumed to facilitate group performance. In more practical terms, there are instances when employees within the same organization may informally decide to follow different “leaders.” This work provides a number of reasons as to *how* and *why* this occurs.

The propositions developed here should serve as motivation for future research. Thus far, only a few researchers have tackled the complexities and outcomes of status disagreement (Kilduff et al., 2016; Gardner 2010). However, a discussion of related research bolsters the notion that status disagreement is more common than previously assumed. Further, the consequences of this phenomenon influence individual-level psychological, affective, and behavioral outcomes that ultimately impact group functioning. If dyads within a group fail to behave on one accord, the entire group will be affected. Thus, the possibilities outlined here deserve further examination, since they suggest a number of implications for both researchers and practitioners within organizational behavior.

Directions for Future Research

While beyond the scope of the current work, future research should explore the more specific effects of various configurations of status perceptions within groups and organizations. For example, it would be interesting to study a dyad of individuals who are engaged in a constant battle for status within a team that has otherwise reached a general consensus about the status ordering. We can imagine that one person would benefit from this form of status disagreement while the other is penalized, due to a lack of group endorsement and support. Further, it would be interesting to study the effects of status disagreement when matched with other positional characteristics, such as formal authority, power, or access to organizational resources and control. Again, it is possible that one person might have enough resources to safely engage in status disagreement, without personally experiencing negative effects. On the other hand, engaging in status disagreement might be more costly for someone who is relatively powerless. Further, these cases should be extended to examine their potential effects on group processes and outcomes.

While this work is focused primarily on private perceptions of status disagreement, future work should examine the point at which private perceptions spill over into public status challenges. I expect that perceptions of legitimacy and in particular, the distinction between validity (the extent to which group values match those of greater society) and endorsements (the extent to which people believe that others' recognize and support status assignments) play a particularly important role in individuals' evaluations of the risks or rewards involved in claiming or granting status. Further, it would be interesting for future research to expand upon the potential role of status disagreement to break down illegitimate hierarchies and rebuild those that are better reflections of group values and perhaps more useful to group functioning.

Additionally, future studies should examine how the degree to which the effects of status disagreements are contingent upon levels of status. For instance, it is likely that members who consider themselves the *highest* status members within a group, occupying a single position at the top of the hierarchy, will experience more intense feelings and behaviors as a result of upward status disagreements than those who still see themselves as high status, but relatively further down the hierarchy.

I propose here that conflicting findings regarding the effectiveness of hierarchies are likely due to disagreement that has thus far been overlooked. Another explanation is that hierarchy is not as fundamental for group functioning as we have assumed. Social identity theories suggest that people are most satisfied, committed, and engaged when they are able to maintain both positive esteem and a high level of distinctiveness. Future studies should explore whether or not horizontal differentiation is more effective for group functioning and performance than vertical status hierarchy in certain situations, as posited by the contingency perspective (Anderson & Brown, 2010) or if status orderings always reproduce themselves.

Emotions have also been shown to play a role in the transmission of status signals. For example, the expression of anger has been associated with high status (Tiedens, 2001), which suggests that those seeking status may strategically regulate their emotional expressions (Clark, 1990). An underexplored possibility is that people may also read and respond to emotional displays differently. For instance, whereas some group members may have the most respect for the person who confidently displays anger, others might lose respect for the same person by interpreting displays of anger as a lack of control and competence in performing the group task. The potential for emotional expressions to signal different levels of status for different perceivers is another interesting area for future research.

We are only beginning to grasp the occurrence and implications of cases when people have varying opinions about who belongs at the top and bottom of a social hierarchy. This work represents some of the first steps towards a broader consideration of the possibilities of this phenomenon, as well as the span of impact perceptual disagreement has for both individuals and groups within organizations. Status disagreement is a complex and nuanced subject, yet, the implications of this topic continue to occur below the radar of much of our discussion regarding status. As such, it is important that researchers continue to expand our understanding of status (dis)agreement so that our collective body of knowledge may begin to account for the perceptual intricacies that determine how status is interpreted, ascribed, and acted out within the workplace.

ESSAY TWO: HOW DOES IDEOLOGY INFLUENCE STATUS PERCEPTIONS?

We are increasingly shedding light on the image of status as a battleground of conflicting perceptions (Anderson & Kilduff, 2016). Yet, we know little about how individual differences might influence how people attain, maintain, and ascribe social status to others (Anderson & Kilduff, 2009; Anderson, Spataro & Flynn, 2008). This oversight presents a unique opportunity to explore the role of ideological differences in the development of status perceptions. Social dominance orientation (SDO) theory suggests that people generally subscribe to one of two competing worldviews: 1) hierarchy-enhancing beliefs, which tend to tolerate and even support hierarchy and inequality between groups, and 2) hierarchy-attenuating beliefs, which value equality, opportunity and the distribution of resources between groups (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). I posit that differences along this dimension determine the degree to which individuals associate status with principles of self-reliance, hardiness, and know-how, versus the association of status with social responsibility, interpersonal warmth, and trust. These ideological distinctions are important for workplace practices, since they may mean the difference between how people within organizations are valued and ultimately, who gets hired, fired, or promoted within organizations. Further, an enhanced understanding of ideological differences allows us to predict how people within an organization may have diverging opinions regarding how to effectively seek status and which behaviors provide the most value to the workplace.

Social status is defined as the prominence, respect, and esteem conferred to an actor in the eyes of others (Ridgeway & Walker, 1995; Zelditch, 2001). Most of the research examining the purpose and outcomes of status draws on the functional perspective (e.g., Cartwright & Zander, 1953; Levine & Moreland, 1990; Van Vugt et al., 2008). According to this perspective, people

within a group evaluate each other according to their actual or potential usefulness in pursuing shared goals. From this point of view, the process of status attainment and conferral is by nature an honest and well-intentioned enterprise. That is, individuals within groups strive to assign status to those who are most deserving. Individual actors receive high status as a reward for their valued contributions to the group. In turn, group processes are made more efficient by developing patterns of deference towards those that are seen as most capable of making sound decisions. Further, status distinctions provide an incentive for actors to contribute to group functioning and the achievement of goals. In this way, workplace evaluations become stable and normalized since those who are accorded high status are the same people who are trusted to make important group decisions as well as those who determine which criteria should be valued. Since the assignment of status involves a normalized process of social evaluation, this process is likely to impact some of the most critical decisions made within organizations, including who is hired among a pool of potential job applicants, who is promoted to lead a team of ambitious employees, and who is given credit for superior performance. Yet, extant research has yet to fully consider the subjective lens through which status understandings emerge. I posit that previous studies have oversimplified the process of social evaluation by underestimating the role of individuals' subjective belief systems as a determinant of cognitive judgment.

While the functional theory of status helps illuminate the cognitive and social motives that drive the emergence of status hierarchies, this research tradition offers little explanation for the fact that groups commonly disagree about who belongs at the top and bottom of a given status hierarchy. We know that status disagreements are generally detrimental to group functioning (Kilduff et al., 2016; Bendersky & Hays, 2012), however, we know less about why these disagreements emerge in the first place. Further, this research tradition does not explain how

status *inefficiencies*, or instances when status is the source of conflict, disagreement, or process-based errors, are surfaced and sustained. That is, why do characteristics that have little or no relationship with an individual's actual value or contributions predict status achievement? For example, overconfident individuals have been shown to achieve status within groups, even though their assertiveness is unrelated to their competence relative to less assertive others (Anderson & Kennedy, 2012). Similarly, physical attractiveness shares a positive relationship with status (Horai, Naccari & Fatoullah, 1974; Maddux & Rogers, 1980). Further, while demographic characteristics such as race and gender are unreliable signals of individual skill, competence, and social value, these cues reliably predict workplace evaluations (Fiske, Cuddy, & Glick, 2007). For example, men are evaluated more positively than women, and minorities are often judged more harshly than their counterparts.

I argue that ideological differences may help illuminate why individuals may have differing opinions about who is most deserving of respect and esteem. Further, a greater consideration of individual ideology may help us do more to account for the possibility of dysfunctional hierarchies. A rich tradition of research has used social dominance orientation (SDO) to explain how ideology influences workplace attitudes and beliefs. Social dominance orientation (SDO) is defined as “the degree to which individuals desire and support group-based hierarchy and the domination of ‘inferior’ groups by ‘superior’ groups” (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999, p. 48). SDO derives from theoretical assumptions that all societies reflect group-based hierarchies, with those at the top possessing a disproportionate amount of social value and resources, and those at the bottom possessing a negative share of social value. Given these observations, SDO represents an individual-level ideological belief that captures the extent to which individuals support hierarchal orderings or are motivated to work towards greater equality. Elitists, or those who score highly

on SDO, are referred to as hierarchy-maintaining, or enhancing, and support principles of inequality, hierarchy, and competition. On the other hand, egalitarians, or those who score low on SDO, are considered hierarchy-attenuating actors, who are motivated by the desire to increase equality and expand opportunities across levels of hierarchical differentiation. The underlying difference between these two schools of thought lie in subjective values that embrace the tenets of self-reliance, hardiness, and know-how, vs. principles related to social respect, interpersonal warmth, and interdependence.

Although values might shift across groups, groups members generally assign status to individuals using two primary dimensions: competence and collective interests (Berger et al., 1972). That is, group members, when determining an organizational hierarchy, will assess one another on the basis of how well-equipped a person is to carry out a work task (competence), as well as how likely they are to use their skills and expertise in service of group needs and goals (warmth). This is a key component of the social development of status hierarchies, since a person may be highly skilled but also prone to act in self-interested ways, at the expense of the group. Similarly, a person may play a very active role in contributing group functioning and helping the collective membership succeed, but lack certain skills and expertise relative to others. Indeed, prior work has convincingly shown that task and situational factors may amplify the importance and attention paid to each of these dimensions (Fragale, 2006; Berger, Rosenholtz & Zelditch, 1980). That is, while each dimension is important to group-based perceptions such as social status, the salience of competence and collective interests may vary based on additional factors.

Interestingly, these dimensions map onto the rich tradition of person perception research (Fiske, Cuddy & Glick, 2006), which provides a framework for social evaluation along the fundamental dimensions of competence and warmth. While warmth refers to such traits as

friendliness, kindness, and trustworthiness; competence represents such things as intelligence, efficacy, and skill. These dimensions are the foundation of person perception because they help individuals first assess if someone is a friend or a foe, that is, if a person intends to be kind and considerate, or if, they are self (vs. other) interested. Next, the competence dimension helps individuals evaluate how capable a person is in carrying out goals that will either benefit others, or benefit themselves. These two dimensions repeatedly arise in studies on person and group perception. The Ohio State leadership studies (Stogdill, 1948, 1974) distinguish between “consideration” (warmth in terms of approachability and concern) and “initiating structure” (competence-orientation, in terms of role/task clarity and performance standards). These concepts continue to serve as the basis for leadership research, where styles are thought of as various combinations of warmth and competence. For example, authoritarian or autocratic leadership emphasizes competence while sacrificing warmth, whereas democratic or participative styles emphasize a leader’s warmth at the expense of skills and expertise (Chemers, 1997). Further, similar to the development of status-related research, studies on situational leadership have argued that authoritarian, or participative leadership styles are more or less appropriate given other factors, such as the type of task or stage of the relationship (Vecchio, 1987; Hersey & Blanchard, 1969).

In both the status research tradition and the area of person perception, these dimensions are used as fundamental evaluation criteria for reasons that ultimately guide interaction patterns within the workplace. Additionally, the importance and attention paid to each these dimensions may vary based on situational, task-based, and, as is argued in this paper, individual factors. Thus, while research on workplace status and person perception are very similar, they have also taken on unique theoretical interests and motivations. While both traditions argue that status and

warmth are important, status researchers tend to emphasize competence judgments. On the other hand, Fiske and colleagues (2016) argue that information about warmth is more cognitively accessible, more predictive, and more heavily weighted than competence. Missing from both approaches is a consideration of how individual ideologies may motivate individuals to be more or less attentive to competence vs. warmth, or vice versa.

Indeed, some scholars suggest that an emphasis on the status-competence link reflects taken for granted assumptions of universal values. More recently, this perspective has been supported by empirical findings that focus on how cultural orientation predicts the way that people attain status and ascribe status to others (Torelli et al., 2014). Whereas those with an individualistic cultural orientation tend to emphasize personal goals of achievement, success, and self-reliance, collectivistic cultures emphasize sociability and interdependence (Triandis, 1995). These differences are non-trivial, as evinced by findings that collectivists tend to engage in status-striving by demonstrating helpful behaviors, and individualists attempt to achieve status by demonstrating their skills and expertise (Torelli et al., 2014). Moreover, these distinctions guide how people judge and evaluate others, with individualists ascribing higher status to actors who display autonomy and expertise, and collectivists conferring higher status to actors who exhibit pro-social behaviors (Torelli et al., 2014). This paper will extend these findings to suggest that status evaluations are grounded not only by a broader cultural lens, but also by more personal views about the nature of social hierarchies and inequalities.

There is reason to believe that the way that people make sense of status hierarchies within the broader context of society influences how they perceive and assign status to actors within the workplace. A well-established body of research shows that differences in social dominance orientation (SDO) predict a range of important outcomes, including individual values, job

preferences, and biases in allocating resources (Pratto et al., 1994; Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994). A range of organizational policies and practices has been spurred by egalitarian beliefs, including policies such as Affirmative Action, minimum wage, and unionization practices. Indeed, studies have found that those high on SDO are reliably opposed to Affirmative Action policies (Aquino, Stewart, & Reed, 2005; Federico & Sidanius, 2002).

At a more granular level, individual ideologies have been shown to influence discriminatory beliefs, with those high on SDO showing higher levels of bias against underrepresented groups but also displaying a respect for authority (Unzueta et al., 2014; Umphress, et al., 2008; Aquino, Stewart & Reed, 2005). This makes sense, given elitists' support of existing hierarchal orderings. Similarly, foundational work on social dominance orientation demonstrated that people seek work roles that are compatible with their SDO levels. Early researchers grouped work roles into "hierarchy-enhancing," or those that are primarily aimed at protecting, serving, or benefiting elite members of society (e.g., politics, police, law) and "hierarchy attenuating", or work roles that are more beneficial for the common good (e.g., teachers, healthcare services). They discovered a positive relationship between self-reported SDO and whether students intended to enter hierarchy-attenuating or hierarchy-enhancing career paths (Pratto et al., 1994). Moreover, work in this area also emphasizes the role of institutions in reinforcing ideologies. That is, the match between individuals' attitudes and institutional goals is one of mutual contribution and reward. One study of a police department found that police officers with the most civilian complaints for brutality and excessive force also received some of the most positive performance evaluations from their supervisors (Christopher et al., 1991). These findings demonstrate the taken for granted links between ideology, behavior, and rewards between people and institutions.

While SDO is a well-validated measure of ideology, since the early years of its development, there have been few follow up studies focused on examining the foundational mechanisms that undergird its predictive power for higher-order societal attitudes. That is, there is a lack of research that explicitly examines how the support or rejection of attitudes related to SDO affects social judgments and evaluations. I posit that a lack of knowledge in this area presents a prime opportunity for us to advance our understanding of the elusive space between individual ideologies and shared (or divergent) status understandings.

Part I: How does ideology influence status-seeking behaviors?

People are thought to think, feel, and behave in ideologically meaningful ways (Jost, 2006). That is, whether or not individuals are aware of where they stand within a hierarchal order, they adapt beliefs that either implicitly support and approve of existing hierarchal arrangements, or, conversely, they adapt beliefs that challenge the merit or legitimacy of hierarchal orderings. As a guiding principle, then, ideologies influence individuals by motivating their behaviors. The workplace is a particularly salient place for individuals to embody their belief systems, due to the variety of roles that are involved in the continuous reproduction of local status hierarchies.

Since elitists, or those who are motivated by hierarchy-enhancing beliefs, tend to endorse social inequalities, it is predicted that they are more likely to subscribe to the belief that individuals should be independent and self-reliant. That is, elitists mostly believe that people already possess the resources that they are entitled to. As such, this belief system is more accurately embodied through independent behaviors, rather than interdependent behaviors that focus on expanding opportunities and potential progress for others. On the other hand, egalitarians, or those who are motivated by hierarchy-attenuating beliefs, tend to see social

inequalities as a problem. Thus, egalitarians are predicted to be more likely to take on warm, supportive roles that are focused on helping others and being considerate towards their needs. Since egalitarians believe that the hierarchy-attenuating is a noble cause, I predict that they are likely to demonstrate related behaviors when trying to win the respect and admiration of others.

H1a: SDO is positively related to the attitude that people should pursue status via competence-related behaviors.

H1b: SDO is negatively related to the attitude that people should pursue status via warmth-related behaviors.

Method

Prior to the actual study, the SDO scale and the items for status striving were presented to subject matter experts (10 faculty and graduate students) who helped revise the SDO (Sidanius, Pratto, & Malworth 2014) and competence/warmth behavior scales (Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002) used in prior research. The SDO scale was revised based on input from faculty (see Appendix A) to bring the targets down from the societal level to the individual level, as seems most appropriate for a study on individuals in organizations. Additionally, certain items were removed because they were broad or de-contextualized. For the competence/warmth behavior scale, faculty and students provided suggestions to revise these items in a way that reflected practical behaviors that might be typical to a workplace, in general (see Appendix B). In addition, preliminary data was collected via 10 survey responses, including qualitative and quantitative data, in order to ensure consistency between suggested status-related behaviors and the scale items. Next, an a priori power analysis was conducted to estimate a target sample size using G*Power analysis. After specifying a model with t-tests using linear multiple regression to observe a single regression coefficient, the analysis suggested a target size of 56 participants to

capture a small effect size of .20, with a desired statistical power level of .95 and probability of .05.

In total, 133 participants were recruited (47% male, 66% Caucasian, mean working experience = 14 years), from a variety of backgrounds and industries, with an inclusion criteria of at least 2 years of work experience. Participants were recruited via Qualtrics, which is an aggregator of panels. Qualtrics works with a number of panel providers. Each panel has its own method of recruitment, though all are fairly similar. Typically, respondents can choose to join a panel through a double opt-in process. Upon registration, they enter some basic data about themselves, including demographic information, hobbies, interests, etc. When a survey is created that the individual would qualify for based on the information they have given, they are notified via e-mail and invited to participate in the survey for a given incentive. Incentives are given on a point system. These points can be pooled and later redeemed in the form of gift cards, Skymiles, credit for online games, etc. For this study, when converting points to monetary value, on average, participants were compensated \$1 for their completion of the survey.

Participants were asked to identify behaviors that should be demonstrated to gain status (i.e., “What should someone do to gain respect and admiration from supervisor/colleagues?”) They were then asked to rate the importance of twelve behaviors using a 7 point scale (1=almost never, 7 = very frequently). Additionally, participants were given the opportunity to list behaviors that were not represented by the given categories. Participants were also asked to rate each item in terms of the extent to which they signal competence (“To what extent does this behavior suggest that one is competent, capable, and intelligent?”) and warmth (“To what extent does this behavior suggest that one is interpersonally warm, good natured, and sincere?”). After completing this survey, subjects completed a revised version of the Social Dominance

Orientation (SDO) (Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth and Malle, 1994) scale, which asks them to rate the extent to which they are high on hierarchy attenuating or hierarchy enhancing beliefs, (e.g., “In an ideal world, all people would be equal,” “It is sometimes necessary to step on others to get ahead in life.”

Results

To assess the construct validity of the Competence/Warmth and SDO multi-item scales, a confirmatory factor analysis was performed using Mplus. For the Competence/Warmth scale, the data was fit to a two-factor model (competence and warmth) which revealed reasonable fit (CFI = .66, RMSEA = .20), and was somewhat better than the fit of a single-factor model (CFI = .61, RMSEA = .21, $\Delta\chi^2 = 88$, $p < .01$). For SDO, after observing select poor loadings for a single factor model, further analysis revealed that a two factor CFA model (egalitarianism and dominance sub-scales) fit the data reasonably well (CFI = .95, RMSEA = .09) and showed improvement over a single factor model (CFI = .69, RMSEA = .24, $\Delta\chi^2 = 256.5$, $p < .01$). The results of this analysis demonstrated that there were two sub-scales embedded in the SDO scale. Indeed, more recent research on social dominance orientation suggests that SDO-D is a sub-scale that captures preferences that support systems of inequality and dominance via forceful, overt oppression, while SDO-E is a distinct scale that reflects a preference for inequality via more subtle hierarchy-enhancing ideologies (Ho et al., 2015). Follow up analyses were conducted using each of these sub-scales as distinct predictors, however, no significant results were found.

To analyze the results of the main predictive model, a simple linear regression was calculated to predict the relationship between social dominance orientation and patterns of categorizing effective status seeking behaviors. Warmth and competence-signaling behaviors were specified as independent variables and social dominance orientation as a dependent variable. A significant

regression equation was found, demonstrating that SDO was positively related to the attitude that competence-signaling behaviors ($b = .12, p = .02, R^2 = .04$, 95% CI .016 to .22) are appropriate ways of gaining status, while SDO was negatively related to the statement that warmth-signaling behaviors ($b = -.18, p = .00, R^2 = .08$, 95% CI -.28 to -.08) should be used to gain status.

Discussion

The results of this study suggest that social dominance orientation is a meaningful ideological difference that predicts how people think others should seek status within the workplace. That is, those that are high in SDO are much more likely than those who are low in SDO to state that people should demonstrate competence related signals and behaviors. On the other hand, those that are low on SDO are more likely to state that people should demonstrate warmth related behaviors to gain the respect and esteem of others. These findings suggest that the implications of ideological difference extend to beliefs regarding differences in appropriate behaviors. This has important implications for status in the workplace, since managers and employees alike may employ strategies that may or may not be recognized by others. For example, an employee who is high on SDO might believe he should demonstrate self-reliance by working on a project independently, whereas another employee who is low on SDO may believe he should engage in more helping behaviors. A manager who observes these differences might believe that one employee is more motivated to obtain esteem and recognition in the workplace, when each person may be equally motivated to gain respect and status. It follows that ideological differences likely have an important influence on beliefs regarding effective status-related behaviors within the workplace.

Part II: How does ideology influence status conferral?

Just as ideologies become guiding principles for behaviors, so should ideology influence social judgment. That is, if we expect ideologies to influence the means through which people attempt to gain status, individuals should also possess the belief that the same set of behaviors should be rewarded. It follows that while organizational behavior literature on personnel selection and hiring and sociological literature on the effects of ideology have developed as separate streams of investigation, the process of hiring job candidates is an inherently subjective process of evaluation. While some recent research has brought light to the process of organizational matching with candidates as an interpersonal exchange of cultural matching (Rivera, 2012), less work has developed this perspective to identify the role of ideology on status granting as an organizational practice.

One of the most critical ways that status evaluations have implications for organizations is through processes of personnel selection, or hiring. Whereas hiring research acknowledges that similarity often drives perceptions of the desirability of candidates, this work has limited its focus to attention of similarities in sex or race (Elliot & Smith 2004; Gorman, 2005). Further, such demographics are often treated as proxies for deeper level similarities such as shared culture. However, we know that demographic factors are only a part of individuals' identities, and similarity predictions are often moderated by other variables (Ely, 1995), which suggests that demographic differences alone do not always substitute for differences in values or subjective ideals. In a neighboring field of research, studies on person-organizational fit often assume that organizations and people represent objective entities of characteristics that complement or supplement one another. However, missing from this perspective is a consideration of how organizations are often represented by individuals (e.g., recruiters, hiring managers) who possess their own set of subjective values, beliefs, and interests. While there is

comparatively little research that directly focuses on similarity between hiring managers and potential candidates (for an exception, see Cable, 1996), there is evidence that subjective preferences may result in the formulation of unique and specific criteria. For example, recruiters have been shown to put job candidates at the top of the list when they discover shared interests, such as being a fan of the same sport (Rivera, 2012). If superficial commonalities override otherwise “objective” criteria, it makes sense that individuals’ deep rooted ideologies in regard to the favorability of hierarchy and inequality might influence perceived value similarity, and subsequent status evaluations.

As mentioned, status is accorded to those who are considered to provide or have the potential to offer valuable resources and contributions that assist in the accomplishment of particular goals. Thus, elitists, or those high on SDO, are expected to confer status on those who are seen as competent and self-reliant, while valuing the warmth dimension as less valuable to a legitimate, functioning hierarchy. That is, since those who score highly on SDO believe that inequality is a hard fact of life, it is predicted that they will have higher respect for those with an independent mindset. Such individuals may appear as if they have ‘rightly’ accepted this ordering and are willing and ready to compete. On the other hand, egalitarians, or those who score low on SDO, are expected to reward individuals who demonstrate warm behaviors with comparatively higher status, since such behaviors are more associated with egalitarian values and beliefs. It follows that those high on SDO will consider behaviors that are related to warmth as actions worthy of admiration and high regard.

H2a: The relationship between SDO and status evaluations is moderated by competence, such that the relationship between SDO and status evaluations is positive when competence is high and negative when competence is low.

H2b: The relationship between SDO and status evaluations is moderated by warmth, such that the relationship between SDO and status evaluations is positive when warmth is low and negative when warmth is high.

Method

To test these hypotheses, the same sample of individuals as used in Part I were told they would be presented with excerpts from cover letters from hypothetical job candidates. The cover letter varied along dimensions of warmth and competence. The cover letter excerpts were presented to SMEs (a small group of 10 graduate students and faculty) who participated in a matching exercise and were asked to guess which category was represented by each of the excerpts. The SMEs confirmed that the cover letter excerpts accurately represented one of desired four categories – high warmth and low competence, high competence and low warmth, high warmth and competence, and finally, low on warmth and competence. For the high competence candidate, their personal statement included items such as “I pride myself in delivering superior work with minimal guidance or direction,” “My high level of expertise allows me to work independently,” “I always deliver results, by any means necessary”, and “Performance is the key to business.”, in combination with low warmth statements. The candidate who is high on warmth had personal statement phrases such as, “Relationships are the key to business”, “As a leader, I think it is important to develop the skills and talents of others”, “I am passionate about providing opportunities for others”, and “I excel at building quality relationships,” In combination with low competence statements. Finally, participants were presented with candidate information for subjects high in both warmth and competence and low in both warmth and competence. In the case of candidates who were low in both warmth and

competence, statements were included such as, “One day, I would like to gain the skills required to work independently, and “I hope to gain the skills to work well with others.”

After reading a candidate’s cover letter excerpt, participants were asked to evaluate his or her status according to five items (high-status, respected, admired by others, high prestige, regarded highly by others) along a seven-point scale (1= strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree). After completing this survey, subjects completed a revised version of the Social Dominance Orientation (SDO) (Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth and Malle, 1994) scale, which asks them to rate the extent to which they are high on hierarchy attenuating or hierarchy enhancing beliefs, (e.g., “In an ideal world, all people would be equal,” “It is sometimes necessary to step on others to get ahead in life.”

Results

A manipulation check was included to check whether participants perceived a significant difference between candidates in terms of competence and warmth based on the experimental conditions to which they were assigned. The manipulation check included 4 items to check how warm candidates were perceived (e.g., “This is a good natured person,” “This is an interpersonally warm person”) in addition to 4 items to check how competent candidates were perceived as being (e.g., “This is a competent person,” “This is a capable person”). The manipulation check was analyzed by conducting a t-test to compare means across groups. After each condition was dummy coded (0,1), the results of the manipulation check indicated that there was a statistically significant difference between high and low warmth conditions. There was a homogeneity of variances, as assessed by Levene’s test for equality of variances ($p = .674$). The mean warmth rating for those assigned to low warmth conditions ($m = 4.18$, $sd = 1.55$) was $-.58$ lower than (95% CI, -1.00 to $-.15$) those assigned to high warmth conditions ($m = 4.76$, $sd =$

1.35). There was a statistically significant difference in mean ratings between conditions $t(129) = -2.68, p = .008$. However, there was not a statistically significant difference detected between high and low competence conditions. The homogeneity of variances test as assessed by Levene's test for equality of variances was violated ($p = .015$). The mean competence rating for those assigned to a low competence condition ($m = 5.25, sd = 1.25$) was $-.26$ (95% CI, $-.59$ to $.085$) lower than those assigned to a high competence ($m = 5.51, sd = .92$) condition, although this difference was not statistically significant $t(129) = -1.48, p = .144$.

To analyze this model, a hierarchical multiple regression analysis was conducted. The data was organized so that the results of status evaluations from all candidates was aggregated into one status rating variable. Then, each condition was dummy coded according whether candidates were meant to represent high (1) or low (0) warmth and competence. First, competence was examined as a moderator of the relationship between social dominance orientation and status evaluations. Two variables were entered in the first step of regression analysis: social dominance orientation ($b = -.01, p = .96, ns$), and competence ($b = -.12, p = .64, ns$). The overall model did not account for a significant amount of variance $F_{2,130} = .11, p = .89, ns$. In the second step of the model, the interaction term was added ($b = .15, p = .47, ns$), and the overall model did not improve in terms of variance explained $\Delta R^2 = .00, F_{3,129} = .25, p = .47, ns$. This model yielded nonsignificant results, demonstrating that neither competence nor SDO alone or entered as an interaction term share a meaningful relationship with status evaluations.

Since the manipulation check was unsuccessful in prompting participants to detect differences between high and low competence candidates, I conducted additional analyses to assess the effects when omitting those who “failed” the manipulation check, or did not associate high and low competence candidates with their desired conditions. The results remained

nonsignificant. That is, when re-running the above analyses, the overall model did not account for a significant amount of variance $F_{2,108} = .14, p = .87, ns$. It follows that the specific predictors, including SDO ($b = .04, p = .67, ns$), competence ($b = .31, p = .21, ns$), and the interaction term ($b = .32, p = .22, ns$), were also un-meaningful predictors of status ratings.

Next, warmth was examined as a moderator of the relationship between social dominance orientation and status evaluations. A hierarchical multiple regression analysis was conducted and social dominance orientation and warmth were entered in the first step. The overall model accounted for a significant amount of variance $F_{2,129} = 3.99, p = .021$. However, while warmth ($b = .68, p = .01, 95\% \text{ CI } .20 \text{ to } 1.16$) was a significant predictor, SDO was not ($b = -.01, p = .93, ns$). In the second step, the interaction term was added, however the model did not improve $\Delta R^2 = .00, F_{3,128} = .20, p = .66, ns$. Further, SDO ($b = -.05, p = .70, ns$), warmth ($b = .42, p = .50, ns$) and the product term ($b = .09, p = .66, ns$) were not significant.¹ These results rule out the potential for a moderation effect.

Part III: How does ideology influence performance evaluations?

As mentioned, the functional theory of status asserts that status assignments serve the purpose of identifying individuals who are most capable of performance. In other words, individuals attend to cues such as competence and warmth to ascertain the level of potential value offered to a given group. These assessments feed a self-fulfilling prophecy, wherein high status individuals are given a greater range of opportunities and resources to perform well. Beyond this initial boost, there is evidence that high status individuals, in comparison to low status individuals, are also rewarded with more favorable performance reviews for identical

¹ The ANOVA for this regression equation including the interaction term reported significance ($p = .05$). This is likely due to multicollinearity (VIF range 6-8).

behaviors (e.g., Berger, Rosenholtz, & Selditch, 1980; Magee & Galinsky, 2008). It follows that the way in which people assign status has a rolling, positive effect on how the performance of high status individuals is evaluated in the future. Thus, I expect that elitists will give higher performance evaluations to those who demonstrate competence behaviors, and egalitarians will give higher performance evaluations to those who demonstrate higher warmth behaviors. Further, it is posited that those high in SDO will be more impressed by competence behaviors when they are also paired with low warmth, and that those are low on SDO will be more impressed by warmth behaviors in the absence of competence-signaling behaviors.

H3a: The relationship between SDO and performance evaluations is moderated by candidate competence, such that the relationship between SDO and performance evaluations is positive when competence is high and negative when competence is low.

H3b: The relationship between SDO and performance evaluations is moderated by candidate warmth, such that the relationship between SDO and performance evaluations is positive when candidate warmth is low and negative when candidate warmth is high.

Method

Participants were randomly presented with appraisals for four employees at a given firm, using performance appraisals adopted from work used in prior research (Leslie, Manchester, Park & Mehng, 2012). Performance ratings were given for each of six dimensions, on a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent). While three of these dimensions were related to competence (e.g., “secures relevant information and identifies possible causes of problems”), three signaled employee warmth behaviors (e.g. “demonstrates the ability and willingness to express opposing viewpoints with tact and consideration”). A small group of subject matter experts (10 faculty and graduate students) confirmed that the items were accurate reflections of these dimensions. The

high competence employee was shown to have very high competence ratings ($M=4.7$), and below the scale midpoint on warmth ($M=2.3$). The high warmth employee had scales that are just the opposite, excelling at warmth ($M=4.7$), but with low competence ratings. A third employee had both high competence and high warmth ratings ($M=4.7$). Finally, a fourth employee had both low competence and low warmth ratings ($M=2.3$). After reviewing the information, participants were asked to evaluate the status of these employees according to five items (high-status, respected, admired by others, high prestige, regarded highly by others) along a seven-point scale (1= strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree).

Finally, a manipulation check was used where participants were asked to rate the employees according to four measures of competence (competent, capable, intelligent, and ambitious) and warmth (interpersonally warm, good-natured, sincere, trustworthy). After completing this survey, subjects completed a revised version of the Social Dominance Orientation (SDO) (Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth and Malle, 1994) scale, which asks them to rate the extent to which they are high on hierarchy attenuating or hierarchy enhancing beliefs, (e.g., “In an ideal world, all people would be equal,” “It is sometimes necessary to step on others to get ahead in life.”

Results

The same manipulation check included in Part II was also used in Part III to assess whether employees were perceived differently based on warmth and competence conditions. The manipulation check was analyzed by conducting a t-test to compare means across groups. After each condition (warmth/competence) was dummy coded (0,1), the results of the manipulation check indicated that there was a statistically significant difference between high and low warmth conditions as well as a high and low competence conditions, demonstrating that the manipulation used in this experiment was effective. In the case of comparing across warmth conditions, the

assumption of homogeneity of variances was violated, as assessed by Levene's test for equality of variances ($p = .00$). The mean warmth rating for those assigned to low warmth conditions ($m = 4.58$, $sd = 1.69$) was -.6 lower (95% CI, -1.08 to -.13) than those assigned to high warmth conditions ($m = 5.18$, $sd = .89$). There was a statistically significant difference in mean ratings between conditions $t(129) = -2.49$, $p = .003$. Similarly, in the case of competence conditions, the assumption of homogeneity of variances test as assessed by Levene's test for equality of variances was violated ($p = .00$). The mean competence rating for those assigned to a low competence condition ($m = 4.43$, $sd = 1.69$) was -.26 (95% CI, -.59 to .085) lower than those assigned to a high competence condition ($m = 5.69$, $sd = .77$) a statistically significant difference $t(129) = -6.57$, $p = .00$. This demonstrates that the manipulation check was effective.

The data was first organized by aggregating performance evaluations across all categories into one outcome variable. Next, all participants were given a dummy code variable based on whether they were assigned to high (1) or low (0) conditions in competence and warmth. A hierarchical multiple regression was performed to test the hypotheses that warmth and competence moderate the relationship between SDO and performance evaluations, or more specifically, that SDO has a positive relationship with performance evaluations when competence is high and a negative relationship with performance evaluations when warmth is high. First, competence was analyzed as a moderator. In the first step, two variables were included: competence and SDO. The overall model accounted for a significant amount of variance $F_{2,130} = 4.69$, $p = .01$. However, while competence was a significant predictor of performance evaluations ($b = .7$, $p = .00$, 95% CI .24 to 1.17), SDO was not ($b = .07$, $p = .45$, *ns*). In the second step of the model, the interaction term was added and each of the predictors were non-significant, including competence ($b = .81$, $p = .19$, *ns*), SDO ($b = .09$, $p = .50$, *ns*) and

the product term ($b = -.04, p = .84, ns$). This model did not show a significant improvement in variance explained $\Delta R^2 = .00, p = .84, ns$.

Next, the moderating effect of warmth was tested by entering warmth and SDO into the first step of a multiple regression model. The overall model accounted for a significant amount of variance $F_{2,130} = 5.95, p = .00$. More specifically, warmth was a significant predictor of performance evaluations ($b = .79, p = .00, 95\% \text{ CI } .35 \text{ to } 1.25$), whereas SDO was not ($b = .05, p = .60, ns$). In the second step of the model, the interaction term was added and the overall model did not improve $\Delta R^2 = .00, F_{3,129} = 4.03, p = .61, ns$. In this model, none of the predictors were significant, including warmth ($b = .39, p = .09, ns$), SDO ($b = .09, p = .47, ns$) or the interaction term ($b = -.01, p = .61, ns$). This model did not demonstrate a significant improvement in variance explained, and rules out the potential for a moderation effect $\Delta R^2 = .00, p = .61, ns$.²

Part II & III: Limitations & Discussion

There were many potential limitations to this study that might explain why these experiments yielded null results. Whereas the instruments used in this study were adapted from prior research, the results of the manipulation check, there were certain cases where the manipulation proved ineffective. Still, even in cases where the manipulation check was successful, SDO was not observed to be a significant predictor of status or performance evaluations. It may be that SDO, as a predictor, is not as related to objective evaluations as it is to socially relative evaluations. For example, while SDO has been used as a measure to capture general beliefs about inequality, it originated as a measure that reflected attitudes towards specific ingroups and outgroups. In this way, it is possible that SDO is relevant to ratings and evaluations only insofar as individuals can

² The ANOVA for this regression equation including the interaction term reported significance ($p = .01$). This is likely due to multicollinearity (VIF range 7-8).

detect social information that can aid them in identifying whether the target is at the “bottom” or “top” of the pyramid within the greater context of societal inequality. It would be instructive for future studies to include more information about social characteristics in addition to competence and warmth signals, for example, socioeconomic status, race, and/or gender. It would be interesting if ideological differences only come to light once people are able to detect where social actors stand within a greater system of social inequality. Moreover, future research should take further steps to examine how this evaluation process is similar or different from self-evaluations and social comparisons.

Another point of consideration is that the construct of interest here refers to a *globalized* operationalization of status, whereas future studies might benefit from a more specific investigation of *individualized* social evaluations. That is, in this study, participants were asked to rate candidates in terms of perceived respect and esteem held by others towards that person. However, if we were to ask participants how much respect they *personally* have for a given candidate, we might observe a different response. The improved understanding of the awareness and mechanisms that lead to personalized beliefs diverging from global beliefs could serve as a fruitful area for future research.

Despite certain null findings, this did yield a significant outcome - ideology does influence the extent to which people make statements about how people *should* demonstrate competence-signaling behaviors vs. warmth signaling behaviors to gain status. This is an important discovery because it demonstrates that people believe that they should act differently even when seeking the same social reward: status and respect. While researchers have used the social dominance orientation framework to understand social attitudes and beliefs, this work unpacks the more granular effects of ideology. If ideological values influence the way that

people weigh the importance of behaviors related to warmth and competence, these findings have implications for why people in the workplace may have diverging views regarding who should be hired to work for a company, who should be promoted into a leadership role, and which employees are demonstrating valuable performance.

Table 1

Essay 1: Means, Standard Deviations and Intercorrelations among Focal Variables								
Variables	Mean	SD	r	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Part I</i>								
1. Social Dominance Orientation	2.98	1.23	.80	--				
2. Warmth Behaviors	3.69	0.80	.84	-0.29**	--			
3. Competence Behaviors	3.44	0.77	.67	0.20	0.39			
<i>Part II</i>								
1. High competence rating	4.46	1.49	.96	-0.01				
2. High warmth rating	5.27	1.14	.86	-0.13				
3. High comp/warmth rating	5.27	1.15	.94	0.21				
4. Low comp/warmth rating	4.80	1.71	.97	-0.04				
<i>Part III</i>								
1. High competence performance	5.10	1.16	.88	0.03				
2. High warmth performance	5.00	0.82	.91	-0.09				
3. High comp/warm performance	5.52	1.23	.95	0.09				
4. Low comp/warm performance	4.02	1.75	.98	0.12				

Notes. $N = 133$.

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

ESSAY THREE: COMPETITION OR COLLABORATION? THE SITUATIONAL IMPORTANCE OF STATUS BASED INTERACTIONS

Does the personal belief that one possesses a high-ranking status position obstruct or promote collaboration with others? More specifically, is it possible for multiple people with self-perceived high status to work together effectively, or is there only enough room for one person at the top? This question has both practical and theoretical importance, since there are many settings where multiple actors who have achieved high status in disparate arenas are expected to come together to solve complex problems. I posit that status distinctions and the interaction patterns that follow are *situationally* activated. Situational factors guide actor's motives and behaviors in two important ways: 1) by heightening or reducing feelings of interpersonal threat, and 1) by encouraging actors to focus on personal or shared goals. For the purpose of this research, I focus on situations with collaborative or competitive potential, and highlight the ways that status beliefs may help or hinder the achievement of personal and shared performance gains.

Status is defined as the level of respect, esteem, and prominence held by a person in the eyes of others. While others confer status, people are engaged in a constant process of interpreting and acting out their self-perceived status position. Whether status is assigned through formal organizational titles, or informal prestige, those who possess high status enjoy a number of privileges by virtue of their social standing. More recently, researchers have begun to focus on the possibilities and consequences of status-motivated interactions, with close attention paid to cases when more than one person sees themselves at the top of the social hierarchy (Kilduff, Willer & Anderson, Gardner, 2012; Bendersky & Hays, 2012).

This topic has important implications for management, since bidding wars over high status actors is common practice across a broad range of organizations, including sports teams, academic departments, consulting firms, start-up firms, and boards of directors. Indeed, the goal

of strategic human resource management often involves the recruitment of high-status individuals with the hopes of assembling a high performance team. However, there are subtleties to the interpretation of status that may sometimes allow individuals to leverage one another's high standing or, at other times, get in each others' way. Further, according to the conflict literature, status conflict is the most detrimental form of conflict, yet, we know less about the conditions or situational factors that cause such conflicts to arise in the first place (Bendersky & Hays, 2012).

While extant research in this area has provided valuable insights to our understanding of how perceptions lead to patterned behaviors, it has also been overwhelmingly focused on the negative shared outcomes of several actors' self-perceived high status, while discounting the possibility of positive effects. For example, those involved in perceptual status disagreements have been shown to reduce their information sharing or withdraw their contributions, which, in turn, interrupts group processing and hurts performance (Kilduff, Willer & Anderson, 2016; Bendersky & Hays, 2012). Status may also hinder shared functionality by becoming the topic of conflict, as demonstrated when competition over status distracts from task achievement (Hildreth & Angus, 2016). In another case, too many high status actors may eventually result in performance loss, especially when individuals' areas of expertise are shown to overlap (Groysberg, 2011). Moreover, status conflicts are highly detrimental, as evinced by research that demonstrates a stronger relationship between status conflict and reduced performance than all other types - including task, process, or relationship based conflict (Bendersky & Hays, 2012).

The goal of this research is to explore how self-perceptions of high status influence individuals' ability to work with others. I posit that although perceptual conflict between two actors who see themselves as high status is typically expected to lead to negative outcomes

(Bendersky & Hays, 2012; Gardner, 2010; Kilduff, Willer, & Anderson, 2016), there is also the potential for positive opportunities. That is, collaborative situations that prompt individuals to focus on shared outcomes may weaken the negative link between high self-rated status and performance, or in some cases, even reverse the direction of this relationship. When actors are encouraged to focus on shared goals, the ambiguity that allows for perceptions of competition and feelings of threat should be dispelled. This should lead actors to focus on their status position as an opportunity to support others rather than a means to bolster their own self-interest. Further, since the experience of high status is associated with a proactive orientation (Bunderson et al., 2011), dyads that both feel they have high status are in a unique position to discover and leverage one another's strengths. Ultimately, it is expected that high status actors will demonstrate an increased ability to work with others in order to enhance communication and clarify task-related goals for more effective collaboration.

I posit that prior research has relied on two central assumptions, both of which are open to challenge. First, while previous studies assume that beliefs about high status lead to self-serving outcomes, I argue that the way in which people act out their status is guided by whether they are motivated by a personal or social frame. This notion is supported by recent theory that makes a distinction between bases of hierarchy, highlighting the difference between independent and interdependent positions of power and status (Blader, Shirako & Chen, 2016). Second, prior studies have focused on the relative nature of hierarchical status, emphasizing the “zero-sum” nature of status orderings, wherein only one person can be on top. This thinking prompts high status actors to be especially attentive to perceived threats to their position. While the relative nature of status is a methodological truth, I argue that subjective experiences of high status do not always subscribe to this schema. Indeed, a substantial body of research posits that “win-lose”

mental frames constitute a perceptual bias in situations characterized by a surplus of unrealized gains (Nadler, Thompson & Jount, 2000; De dreu et al., 2000; Liu et al., 2016). I will expand this line of research to consider cases where self-perceived high status actors might come together in order to maximize shared value.

Power and status are closely related concepts, with important distinctions. Whereas power refers to social influence and control (Magee & Galinsky, 2008; Blader, Shirako & Chen, 2016), status reflects one's level of worth, value, and competencies as conferred by others (Anderson & Kilduff, 2009). Within the related stream of power research, the question of whether power increases or decreases pro-social motives and behaviors has produced mixed results (Galinsky, et al., 2006; Lammers et al., 2008). Researchers have explained this divergence by delineating between two distinct forms of power: personal and social. Whereas personal power refers to autonomy and freedom from the others, social power refers to control and influence over others (e.g., Weber, 1978). If personal power is based on independence, those who experience this form of power are free from the opinions and actions of others, which prompts them to attend to their social environment less. Tost (2015) makes a distinction between structural power and psychological power, arguing that structural power (e.g., role-based) is more likely to create a sense of responsibility, which causes actors to be more responsive and attentive to the needs of others.

This line of reasoning is very similar to more recent work on status. Rather than parsing out a separate form of power, some researchers have suggested that mixed findings in the power research are due to the conflation of power with status (Blader, Shirako, Chen, 2016). This perspective argues that since status is by definition conferred by others, those with high status become more closely attuned to the needs of those around them. Indeed, the differential effects

of status and power have been empirically tested, suggesting that those with high status tend to exhibit higher levels of fairness and justice in their interactions with others, whereas high levels of power have the opposite effect (Blader & Chen, 2012).

Together, recent directions in power and status research demonstrate that these concepts are much more complex than previously assumed. Further, while studies are beginning to uncover how self-perceived high status actors interact with low status actors, in benevolent versus self-serving ways, few studies have focused specifically on the interaction between two individuals who both see themselves as high status. I argue that a consideration of situational characteristics will allow us to unravel between critical differences in status-motivated interactions.

High/High Status Dyads in Competitive Situations: Personal and Shared Value

So how do we explain past findings that “too many cooks in the kitchen,” or people who see themselves as high status, may be a recipe for disaster (Groysberg et al., 2011; Kilduff et al., 2016)? I argue that unique features characterize these situations: the perception of threat and a focus on personal goals. According to the functional view of status, status orderings help facilitate the group achievement by assigning status to actors who are deemed the most competent, and directing the flow of communication (Berger, 1972). Deferential behaviors are traditionally viewed as status signals. These include both verbal and non-verbal micro-interactions such as attentive facial expressions, nodding, smiling, praising, or soliciting advice. From this perspective, deference flows from low status to high status team members (e.g., Berger et al., 1972) in a process that symbolizes an asymmetrical subordinate-dominant relationship. The functionality of this social arrangement is supported by dominance complementary theory, which suggests that high status, dominant actors prefer interaction partners that respond to them

with conciliatory behavior (Tiedens, Unzueta & Young, 2007).

However, in cases where self-perceived high status actors are working together, it is more likely that their expectations for how they should be treated will go unmet, or even violated. That is, two people who both view themselves as high status may find that their interaction partners withhold acts of deference, failing to treat them in the way they feel they deserve. Thus, individuals likely experience feelings of threat once they realize that their self-perceived high status is unrecognized by others. Moreover, this experience is exacerbated by the fact that once they see themselves as high status, actors become highly attuned to status cues (Blader & Chen, 2011) and develop a heightened sensitivity to threat. Indeed, studies have found that high status actors tend to be highly reactive and defensive to social evaluations (Gruenewald et al., 2006). Such findings reflect the inclination for high status actors to become overly concerned with maintaining their social standing. This focus leads to physiological symptoms, such as increased stress as measured by elevated cortisol levels (Helhammer, Buchtal, Gutberlet and Kirschbaum, 1997), and ultimately, reduced performance (Marr & Thau, 2014).

While we cannot be certain about the exact mechanisms that lead high status actors to engage in counterproductive behaviors, I suggest that situational characteristics play a large role in determining how individuals will interact with one another. For example, in one past study, high status actors were studied within the highly competitive field of Wall Street equity (Groysberg et al., 2011). In another study, while the setting was not clearly competitive, self-perceived high status participants had the choice to opt-out from group-related activities, as suggesting by their withdrawal of contributions (Kilduff et al., 2016). Further, the method of self-ranking builds on fixed pie perceptions, as when self-perceived high status actors are asked to rate themselves relative to others. I argue that situational factors may encourage both

competition and fixed pie perceptions. For actors who perceive themselves as high status, such an environment may be perceived as threatening, and will lead to suboptimal processes. As discussed, retaliation may take a subtle form of withdrawal, or it may take a more overt form of active conflict over status positions. It is expected that in a situation that cannot be immediately escaped, we will observe higher levels of overt conflict between two high status actors. In both cases, self-perceived high status actors will demonstrate high levels of self-focus due to concern about maintaining their standing. It follows that a focus on personal goals (maintaining one's status position) will take precedent over task-based processes and shared performance gains. This may cause actors to be overly suspicious about their interaction partner's intentions, and overlook the potential for mutual benefits. If both partners have this mentality, they will be ineffective at producing value.

H1a: In a competitive situation, a high/high status dyad will achieve higher personal gains than a low/low status dyad.

H1b: In a competitive situation, a high/high status dyad will achieve higher joint gains than a low/low status dyad.

H1c: In a competitive situation, a high/low status dyad will achieve higher personal gains than a high/high status dyad.

H1d: In a competitive situation, a high/low status dyad will achieve higher joint gains than a high/high status dyad.

High/High Status Dyads in Collaborative Situations: Personal and Shared Value

While comparatively less explored, there is reason to believe that when individuals both perceive themselves to have high status, there is potential for positive outcomes. Indeed, a relatively smaller body of research suggests that those who see themselves as high status might

adopt a pro-social orientation, given certain individual traits or situational characteristics. For example, individuals who are high on self-monitoring successfully gain status by demonstrating helpful behaviors (Flynn, et al., 2006). Other researchers have found that when helping behaviors are rewarded with deference from others, actors are more likely to increase their group contributions (Willer, 2009).

Further, more recent work challenges the assumption that acts of deference are always reflections of the status ordering. Contrary to the dominance complementarity view, which suggests that asymmetric relations are the preferred mode of exchange (Tiedens, 2005), this work demonstrates that acts of deference are not only limited to beliefs and implications regarding someone's superior standing, but also may be motivated by less strategic social affinities such as warmth, liking, or friendship (Joshi & Knight, 2015). For instance, two team members working closely together on a strategic proposal for the company might defer to each other because they share the same interests or objectives with respect to the firm's strategic direction, feel a mutual affinity due to similar rank, or because they simply prefer to not challenge each other's status on the team (Joshi & Knight, 2015; Fragale et al., 2012; Kalkhoff & Barnum, 2000). In this way, acts of deference are not always enactments of relative status, they may also be used as signs of warmth intended to communicate that someone intends to work *with* another person rather than against them.

Based on this discussion, I suggest that acts of deference are not always limited to those who perceive themselves to be low status. In fact, actors who believe themselves to hold high status might defer to others in order to encourage them to share useful information, motivate them to be persistent with a difficult task, or acknowledge their performance. This should take the form of positive reinforcement, which adds to a productive dynamic and buffers the potential

for feelings of threat. Moreover, these strategies tend to be highly effective. That is, high status individuals are especially influential when they choose to adopt an interest in collective gains (Bunderson, 2011). Whereas members of equal-status groups are less inclined to share uniquely held information (Stasser, 1999), in groups of unequal status, higher status members who demonstrate a participative style of leadership encourage information sharing ask lower status others for their unique input and give credit to their contributions (Larson, Foster-Fishman, & Franz, 1998). Further, the same study found that when high status members do not display a participative leadership style, the unique information held by lower status members was likely to be overlooked or ignored.

I argue that in collaborative situations, when self-perceived high status individuals are primed to focus on creating shared value, we will observe elevated performance. That is, two high status actors working together should be more effective than any other combination of status orderings in collaborative situations. This is because high status actors should be more engaged and motivated than low status actors to accomplish shared goals.

H2a: In a collaborative situation, a high/high status dyad will achieve higher joint gains than in a competitive situation.

H2b: In a collaborative situation, a high/high status dyad will achieve higher personal gains than a low/low status dyad.

H2c: In a collaborative situation, a high/high status dyad will achieve higher joint gains than a low/low status dyad.

Hd2: In a collaborative situation, a high/high status dyad will achieve higher personal gains than a high/low status dyad.

H2e: In a collaborative situation, a high/high status dyad will achieve higher joint gains

than a high/low status dyad.

Low/Low Status Dyads in Competitive Situations: Personal and Shared Value

In contrast to those with high status, low status actors have relatively lower levels of self-esteem, which influences their likely behaviors. Actors who perceive themselves as low status are expected to demonstrate more propitiating behaviors which prevent them from speaking up or out of turn, challenging others' opinions, or sharing novel ideas (Bunderson, 2011). Empirical evidence tends to support these predictions, showing that low-status parties have low levels of psychological engagement, since their relatively low-status position is likely to undermine their sense of self and their belief that they have the efficacy to elevate their status (Joshi & Fast, 2013; Marr & Thau, 2014; Phillips & Zuckerman, 2001). Indeed, low status carries negative implications that may prompt rationalization of one's low status position (e.g., Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004) or create psychological disengagement from the group (Smith, Murphy, & Coats, 1999; Tyler & Blader, 2000). Further, in a group of studies examining the causal effects of status (Anderson, Kraus et al., 2012), the authors found that when participants were asked to imagine interactions with a partner who had either a low or high level of respect, admiration, and influence in their social groups, those who were made to experience high status reported higher levels of subjective well being than those who were manipulated to feel low status.

In a competitive situation, it is expected that low status dyads will do very little in the way of yielding to one another's interests and needs. Unlike high status dyads who should be more actively engaged in promoting their needs, low status dyads are expected to demonstrate more protective behaviors. That is, low status dyads will demonstrate more defensive behaviors, but, as compared high status dyads, they will avoid overt conflict. On the other hand, in the case of dyads that include at least one high status actor, those with high status should be able to

encourage their partner to share information and become engaged in the process of productive exchange.

H3a: In a competitive situation, a low/low status dyad will achieve lower personal gains than a low/high status dyad.

H3b: In a competitive situation, a low/low status dyad will achieve lower joint gains than a low/high status dyad.

Low/Low Status Dyads in Collaborative Situations: Personal and Shared Value

In a collaborative situation, two low status actors may either display low levels of engagement, or, they may demonstrate inhibited behaviors. If both actors display low levels of confidence and assertion, it is expected that they will not reach optimal gains. For these reasons, it is expected that two low status actors will be comparatively less engaged with a task focused on creating value than those with high status. Further, in support of the functional theory of status, the absence of a high status actor will leave low status dyads with a lower comparative level of responsibility and initiative for high performance.

H4a: In a collaborative situation, a low/low status dyad will achieve lower personal gains than a low/high status dyad.

H4b: In a collaborative situation, a low/low status dyad will achieve lower joint gains than a high/low status dyad.

Method

Procedure. Hypotheses presented here were tested with a 3 (status: low/low vs. high/low vs. high/high) x 2 (situational prime: collaborative vs. competitive) experimental factor design. This study used a negotiation scenario that has been used in prior research (Dimotakis, Conlon & Illies, 2012; Conlon, Moon & Ng, 2002; DeRue et al., 2009). Participants in the classroom chose

partners to create dyads, and each dyad was tasked with settling seven issues. Each participant was given materials to review regarding the case, as well as information about the roles they will play, and supporting background information that can be used as points for the development of positions. After reading the materials, participants were questioned to see if they understood the issues of the case.

Sample. Participants were recruited from classes at a large university in the Southeast. An a priori power analysis was conducted to estimate a target sample size using G*Power analysis. By specifying t-tests to compare the difference between two independent means, the analysis suggested that 156 participants would be required to capture a medium effect size of .4, with a desired statistical power level of .8 power and probability of .05. In total, 158 subjects participated in this study. After removing missing and incomplete data, the hypotheses were tested on a final sample size of 144 undergraduate business majors. As compensation for their participation, participants received 2 extra points towards their final course grade.

Negotiation Scenario. This study used a mixed-motive negotiation scenario. While the scenario and roles across conditions were identical, the pay-off schedule for each of the seven issues was manipulated so that two of the seven issues (moving expenses and insurance) were distributive and four of the seven issues had integrative potential. That is, four issues allowed for potential trade-offs (integrative), whereas two issues were in direct opposition to one another (distributive). One of the seven issues was compatible, meaning that both negotiation partners received the same number of points for each potential decision.

Situational manipulation. The situational manipulations were embedded in participants' role materials. In the competitive condition, participants were told that the two companies have been engaged in decades of hostile competition. Further, participants were told that their ability

to perform well and “win” the negotiation by securing more points than their partner, will determine whether or not they will be titled the new Chief Human Resources Officer of the merging company. In the collaborative condition, participants were told that it is important to maintain a friendly relationship with their partner and that their successful collaboration will set the tone for the future of the company.

Status manipulation. The status manipulations were embedded in participants’ role materials. Participants were primed to believe that they are high or low status, and were also told whether their partner is high or low status. The manipulation used here is taken from prior manipulations of status (Blader & Chen, 2012) within negotiations.

Participants in the high status condition with high status partners were informed:

You and your negotiation partner are quite well known in the industry as high-status individuals. You are both two of the most respected people in the industry. People really hold you both in high regard, and you both have a great deal of esteem from others.

Participants in the high status condition with low status partners were informed:

You are quite well known in the industry as a high status individual. You are one of the most respected people in the industry. People really hold you in high regard, and you have a great deal of esteem from others. On the other hand, your partner is not well known in the industry. When making important decisions, they typically defer to others who are held in higher regard and gave greater industry-level prestige than they possess.

Participants in the low status condition with high status partners were informed:

You are not well known in the industry. When making important decisions, you typically defer to others who are held in higher regard and have greater industry-level prestige than you possess. On the other hand, your negotiation partner is quite well known in the industry as a

high status individual. They are one of the most respected people in the industry. People really hold them in high regard, and they have a great deal of esteem from others.

Participants in the low status condition with a low status partner were informed:

You and your negotiation partner are not well known in the industry. When making important decisions, you both typically defer to others who are held in higher regard and have greater industry-level prestige than you both possess.

Manipulation checks. Participants were asked to answer two questions to verify the success of the experimental manipulations: “How much status did the character or role you were playing have?” The question will be answered on a scale ranging from 1 (very little) to 7 (a great deal). An additional check for the status condition will be in the form of a question, “How important was it to you that your negotiation partner show respect for you during the negotiation?” (scale ranging from 1 [not at all] to 7 [very]).

Following the negotiation exercise, personal value was measured according to the number of individual points participants are able to secure, and shared value will be measured according to the number of joint gains realized within dyads.

Participants were also asked to complete the Subjective Value Inventory (SVI), which examines the extent to which partners have built a trusting relationship and would be open to working together in the future.

Results & Analysis

A manipulation check was included to assess the degree to which the high and low status prime created a significant difference in the extent to which participants felt as if they were high status and had higher (or lower) status than their counterpart. A t-test was conducted to compare means between groups, and demonstrated that the manipulation was effective in creating a

difference in perceptions of status, but ineffective in creating a difference in how much respect each participant expected to receive. A t-test showed that those in the high status condition reported a higher mean than those in the low status condition and there was a statistically significant difference between groups $t(147) = 5.84, p = .05$. For the respect item, there was a homogeneity of variances, as assessed by Levene's test for equality of variances ($p = .94$), while those in the high status condition reported a higher mean ($m = 3.46, sd = .91$) than those in the low status condition ($m = 3.41, sd = .93$), there was not a statistically significant difference between groups $t(147) = -.33, p = .74$. Similarly, the situational prime was ineffective. There was a homogeneity of variances, as assessed by Levene's test for equality of variances ($p = .90$), and while those in the collaborative condition reported a greater concern ($m = 3.65, sd = .59$) for their counterpart than those in the competitive condition ($m = 3.53, sd = .57$), the difference between the two was not statistically significant $t(139) = 1.3, p = .19$.

The analysis for this study occurred in two stages. First, an ANOVA was conducted to determine if the means between the groups was equal. Next, a series of between-groups analyses were performed to test each set of proposed hypotheses. The results of the ANOVA suggested significant main effects of status dyads as well as an interaction between status dyads and the situation. To identify where these effects were located, I conducted a series of t-tests to compare group means.

The first set of predictions suggest that within a competitive situation, two high status partners will achieve higher personal and shared gains than two low status partners. The results of an independent samples t-tests showed that the mean individual performance of two high status dyads was higher (10,105) than two low status partners (9,659). That is, high status partners performed 445 (95% CI, -1,200 to 2,091) points higher than low status partners. There

was not a statistically significant difference between the two $t(40) = .56, p = .57$. Next, it was predicted that high status partners paired with other high status partners will achieve both lower individual and lower shared gains than when paired with low status partners. An independent samples t-test was run to determine if there were differences in performance between the two groups. For individual performance, there was a homogeneity of variances as assessed by Levene's test for equality of variances ($p = .85$). The mean individual performance score for high status persons paired with high status partners was lower (9,659) than that for high status persons paired with low status partners (10,259). High status persons' performance when paired with high status partners was 599 (95% CI, -647.08 to 1,846.55) points lower than high status persons paired with low status partners. There was not a statistically significant difference in mean performance between these groups $t(37) = .98, p = .85$. For shared performance, the assumption of homogeneity of variances was violated, as assessed by Levene's test for equality of variances ($p = .035$). The mean shared performance for high status persons paired with high status partners was 749 points (95% CI, -171.45 to 1,669.84) lower than high status persons paired with low status partners. However, there was not a statistically significant difference in mean performance between groups $t(37) = 1.65, p = .09$.

The suggestion that high status dyads perform better in collaborative than competitive situations was supported. The assumption of homogeneity of variances was violated, as assessed by Levene's test for equality of variances ($p = .00$). The mean shared performance for high status persons paired with high status partners in collaborative situations was 3,296 points (95% CI, 1,191.63 to 5,400.88) higher than in competitive situations. There was a statistically significant difference in mean performance scores between situations, $t(41) = 3.1, p = .003$. The following set of hypotheses compares performance gains within collaborative situations. It is predicted that

high status persons when paired with high status partners will achieve higher personal and shared gains than when paired with low status partners. As for individual performance in collaborative situations, high status persons with high status partners scored 738.78 points (95% CI, -2,694.42 to 1,216.89) higher than high status persons with low status partners. However, this difference was not statistically significant $t(43) = -.76, p = .98$. For shared performance in collaborative situations, high status persons when matched with low status partners scored 2,078.01 points (95% CI, -5708.57 to 1552.41) lower than when matched with high status partners. There was not a statistically significant difference in mean performance between groups $t(43) = -1.15, p = .063$.

The next set of hypotheses suggests that within competitive situations, low status persons with low status partners will perform worse than when paired with high status partners. As for individual performance, low status people when paired with low status partners achieved higher performance 10,105.00 than when paired high status partners 9,688.24, contrary to the stated hypotheses. Low status persons with low status partners performed 416.77 points higher than when paired with high status partners (95% CI, -1,298.46 to 2,131.99), but there was not a statistically significant difference in mean performance between groups $t(35) = .49, p = .26$. As for shared performance, low status persons with low status partners performed 59.8 points better than those with high status partners, however, this was not a statistically significant difference $t(33) = -.23, p = .18$.

The final set of hypotheses suggests that low status persons paired with low status partners in a collaborative situation will perform lower than those paired with high status partners. While there was not a statistically significant between these groups, the results were in the predicted direction, with low status persons with low status partners reporting a lower

individual performance mean (8,952.94) than those with high status partners (10,290.00). Similarly, low status partnerships with two low status members performed worse as a pair (16,828.57) than low status and high status partnerships (20,445.45). As for individual performance, low status persons with low status partners secured -1337 less points than those with high status partners (95% CI, -3,337.82 to 663.70), but there was not a statistically significant difference in mean performance between groups $t(25)=-1.38$, $p=.38$. In terms of shared performance, low status persons when paired with low status partners scored -3616 points lower than those with high status partners (95% CI, -6417 to -816), with no statistically significant difference in mean performance between groups $t(23)=-2.68$, $p=.55$.

Discussion

Most of the results of this study did not reach statistical significance. However, apart from low status dyad comparisons, the relationships were in the predicted direction. That is, the relative performance of status pairings shifted based on situational cues. There were several limitations of this study that likely contributed to a lack of statistically significant results. From a methodological viewpoint, while the primes used in this study were adapted from prior research studies, the manipulation checks revealed that while the status primes were effective in creating differing perceptions of status, it was ineffective in creating differences in expectations for respect. Similarly, the situational primes were ineffective. It could be that this study did not include a strong enough prime to override the status orderings within the naturalistic setting. Another possibility is that the structure of the negotiation payoffs made it difficult for partners to collaborate versus compete when prompted to do so. While participants were instructed to keep their payoff schedules unknown to their negotiation partner, a distributive payoff structure, or scenario where greater performance for one partner equals weaker performance for their

counterpart, might prevent partners from effectively cooperating with one another even when presented with a collaborative prime. Future studies should develop specific strategies for potential trade-offs between partners of different dyadic combinations for dealing with specific issues.

Further, the data for this experiment was collected from classrooms where selection biases and interaction effects likely played a role in the results. That is, the participants in this study were students who negotiated with those closest in physical proximity to them, which likely included friends or those with whom they have shared other formative experiences. However, this study design did not account for familiarity or the quality of relationships between negotiators. Similarly, while there is reason to believe that individual differences take on meaning as status characteristics, this study did not measure traits such as extroversion and dominance, for example. It would be interesting for future research to examine the potential influence of individual characteristics such as these on both the actor's role-playing and the interaction partner's perceptions of status assignments. In addition, future research could benefit from field studies that might leverage the naturalistic emergence of status orderings within work teams or organizations.

Another possibility is that status becomes especially salient for high status actors' performance when pitted with or against other high status actors. Similarly, while it was not explicitly hypothesized, the results of this study demonstrated that low status actors when paired with other low status actors performed better in competitive situations than collaborative situations. It could be the case that competitive situations create feelings of threat when actors perceive themselves as being the same in status. The examination of status similarity, in comparison to status distance, could be a fruitful area for future research. Indeed, while studies

focusing on the influence of status have recently surged in the management literature, we know comparatively less about the experience of low status and related outcomes.

Despite these null findings and study limitations, one key finding emerged that contributes to existing research. That is, two high status actors perform substantially better when reminded that a work setting is *collaborative* vs. *competitive*, with ensuing rewards for each situation. Past findings on status conflict among high-powered dyads (Hildreth & Angus, 2016), and self-perceived high status actors within teams (Kilduff et al., 2016) suggest that those who perceive themselves as high status are destined to bring each other down. By focusing on situational characteristics, this work presents an alternate view: status positions take on meaning according to the given context. It is expected that high status actors competing against one another will be focused on defending their respective positions. Thus, high status actors may be more content to win more resources than their competitive partner, even if there are fewer resources distributed overall. On the other hand, in collaborative situations, high status actors are more likely to view their role as one of social responsibility. Thus, they are expected to claim less for themselves and work harder to extract shared value. This perspective also adds valuable nuance to our understanding of why conflict emerges in the first place. If high status actors are especially engaged when placed in competitive scenarios, this provides a useful explanation for why status conflicts are more detrimental than other types of disagreements (Bendersky & Hays, 2012). That is, when high status actors are preoccupied with maintaining their standing, they may inadvertently engage in self-sabotaging behaviors by becoming distracted from the task at hand. On the other hand, if high status actors are confident that their standing is not in jeopardy and reminded to focus on shared goals, we are likely to observe an enhanced level of

performance. These points help refine our understanding of dyadic conflict within organizational settings.

It follows that high status actors should be able to create room for each other at the top, especially in the absence of threat and when they are prompted to anchor on shared goals. This research proposes that both conditions can be successfully met by situational circumstances.

Figure 1: Overview of Essay 1

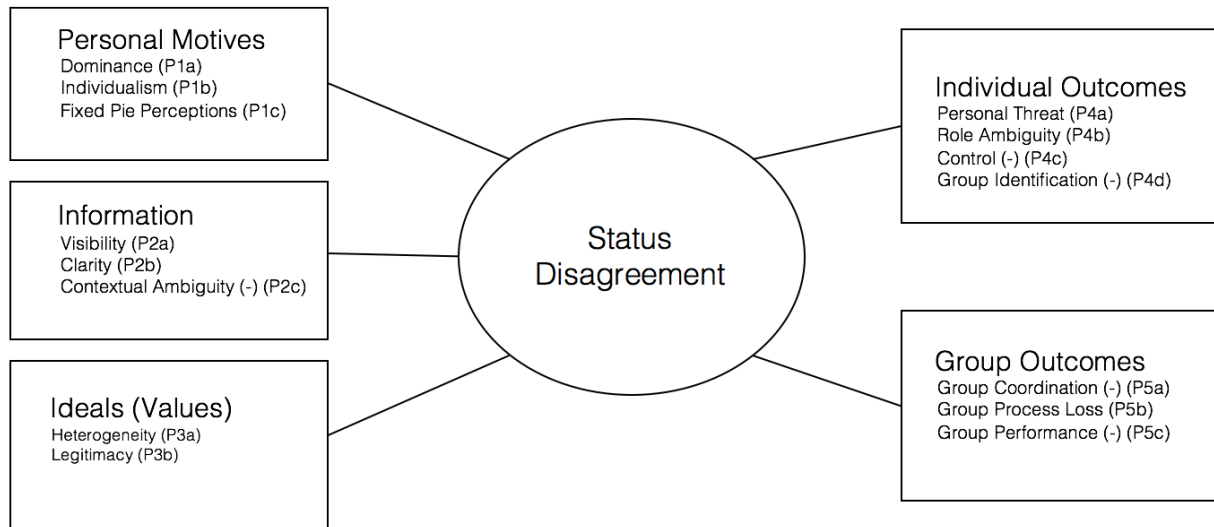


Figure 2: Overview of Essay 2

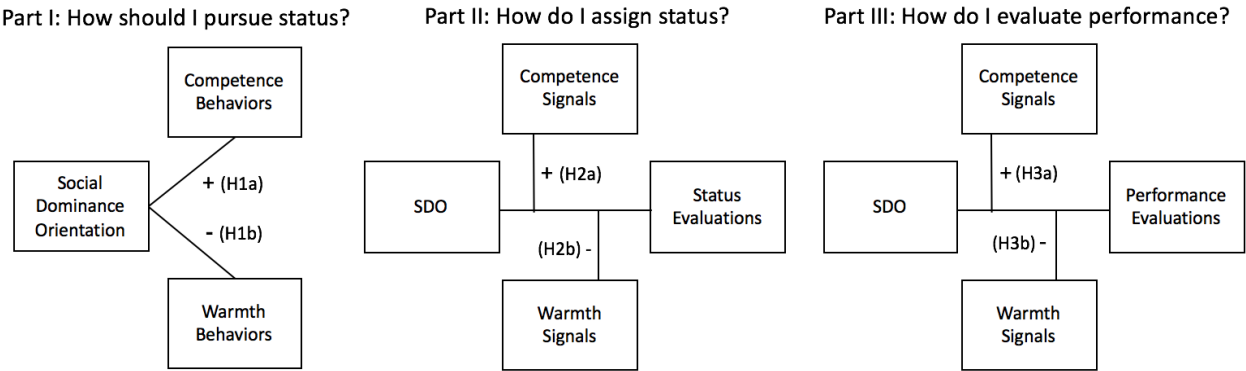
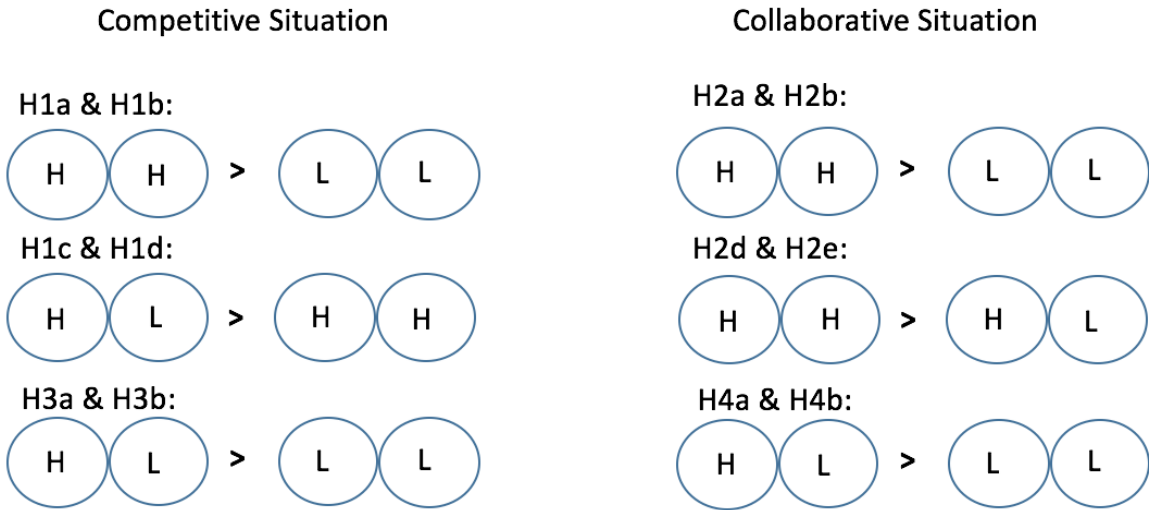


Figure 3: Overview of Essay 3



*Table 1***Essay 3: Means, Standard Deviations, and Intercorrelations among Study Variables**

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1. Status	1.46	0.50	--				
2. Situation	1.49	0.50	-.10	--			
3. Gender	1.43	0.50	.15	.39*	--		
4. Race	2.03	1.02	.16*	.04	-.05	--	
5. Individual performance	10,203.38	2,515.95	-.19*	.12	.02	-.11	--
6. Shared performance	20,222.53	3,624.94	-.21*	.40	-.13	-.07	.49*

Note. $N = 156$. Individual and shared performance are measured in number of negotiation points.

* $p < .05$

Table 2

ANOVA: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects on Shared Performance

Source	df	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	3	6.88	.00
Intercept	1	4,712.29	.00
Status	1	6.99	.01
Situation	1	0.81	.37
Status*Situation	1	11.10	.00
Error	140		
Total	144		

 $R^2 = .128$ (Adjusted $R^2 = .110$)

Table 3

Individual performance of status dyads in competitive situations

	Means	Levene's test	t	df	p	Mean difference	95% CI Lower	Upper
High-High vs. High-Low	19,227.27 9,659.09	.008	2.13 1.91	54	.04 .06	314.44	-737.75	1,366.63
High-Low Vs. Low-Low	19,976.47 19,916.67	.184	-.23	33	.82	59.8	-1,877.2	477.13
Low-Low vs. High-High	19,916.67 19,227.27	.00	1.69	38	.10	689.39	-1200.13	1,456.15

Table 4

Individual performance of status dyads in collaborative situations

	Means	Levene's test	t	df	p	Mean difference	95% CI Lower	Upper
High-High vs. High-Low	22,523.53 20,445.45	.01	-1.59	54	.12	-2,078.08	-4,372.07	215.92
High-Low Vs. Low-Low	10,581.82 8,952.94	.44*	3.35	34	.00	3,616.88	1,422.99	5,810.78
Low-Low vs. High-High	8,952.94 11,320.59	.13*	3.43	46	.00	5,694.96	2,350.95	9,038.97

Table 5

Individual performance of status dyads in competitive situations

	Means	sd	Levene's test	t	df	p	Mean difference	95% CI Lower	Upper
High-High vs. High-Low	10,258.82 9,659.09	1,797.24 1,984.14	.85	.98	36	.33	599.73	-647.08	1,846.55
High-Low Vs. Low-Low	10,105.00 10,258.82	3,078.87 1,797.24	.27	-.18	35	.85	-153.82	-1,877.2	1,569.61
Low-Low vs. High-High	9,659.09 10,105.00	1,984.14 3,078.87	.29	.56	40	.57	445.90	-1200.13	2091.94

Table 6

Individual performance of status dyads in collaborative situations

	Means	sd	Levene's test	t	df	p	Mean difference	95% CI Lower	Upper
High-High vs. High-Low	11,320.59 10,581.82	2,831.89 2,784.56	.98	-.76	43	.45	-738.77	-2,694.42	1,216.88
High-Low Vs. Low-Low	10,581.82 8,952.94	2,831.89 2,213.63	.31	-1.7	26	.10	-1,628.88	-3,593.35	335.59
Low-Low vs. High-High	8,952.94 11,320.59	2,213.63 11,320.59	.20	-3.2	39	.00	-2,367.65	-3,820.57	-914.72

Diagram 1

High status dyads' performance across situations

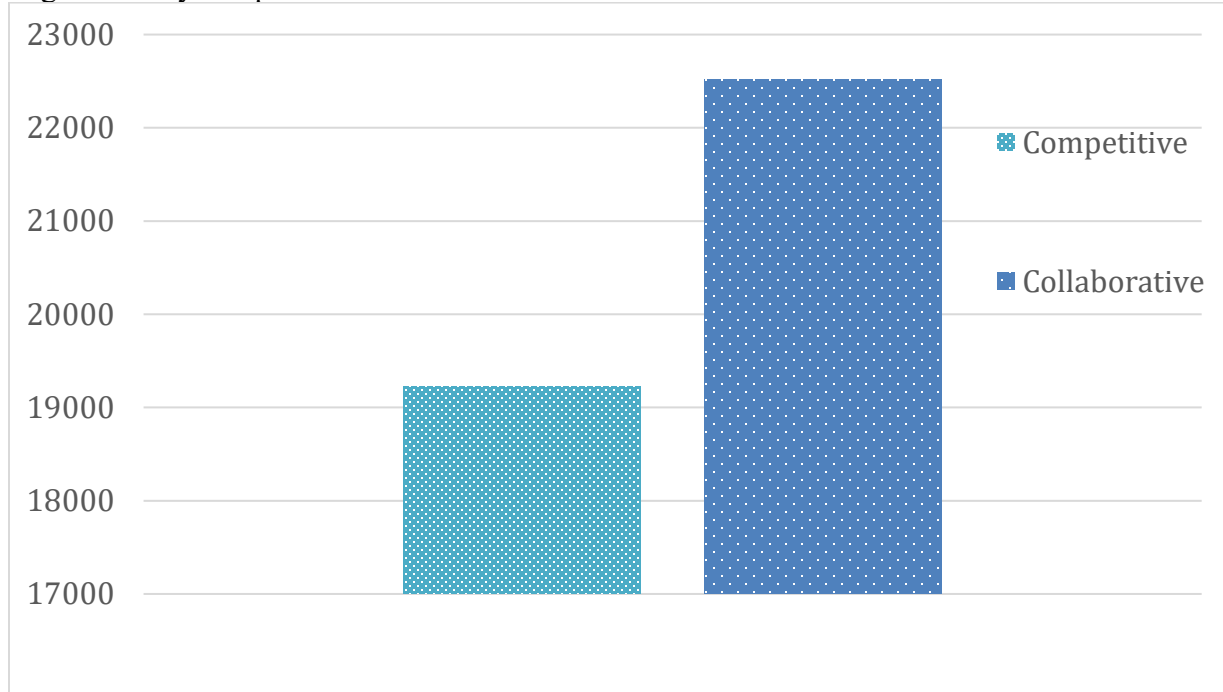


Diagram 2

Status dyads' performance in collaborative situations

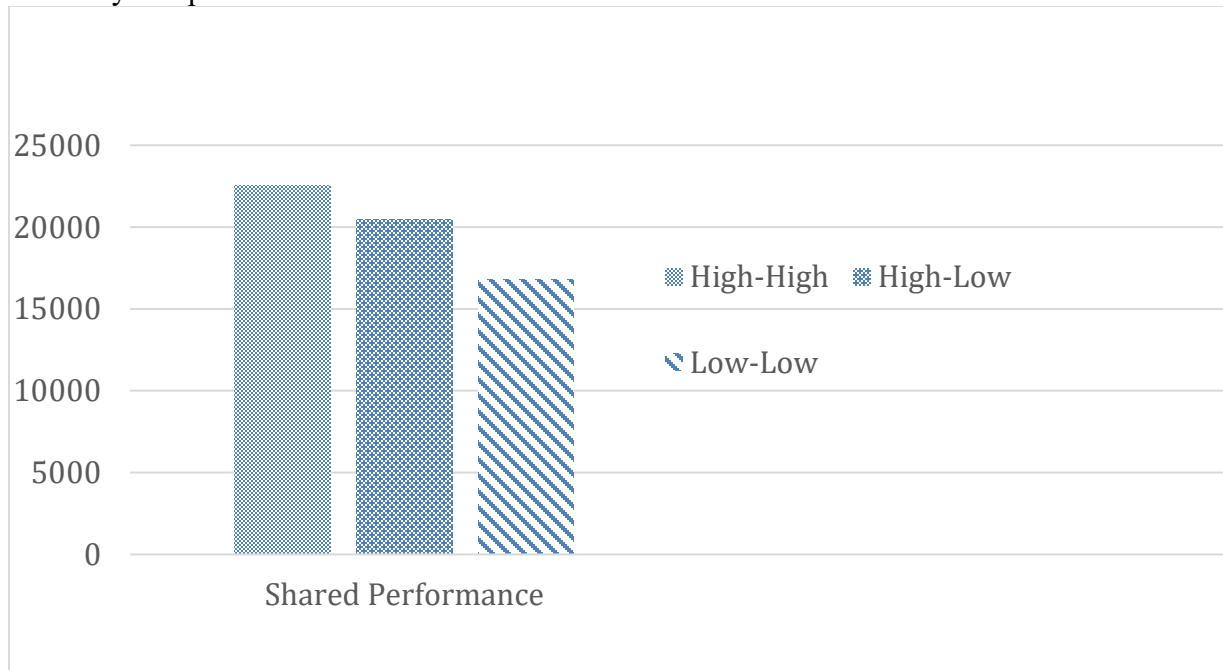
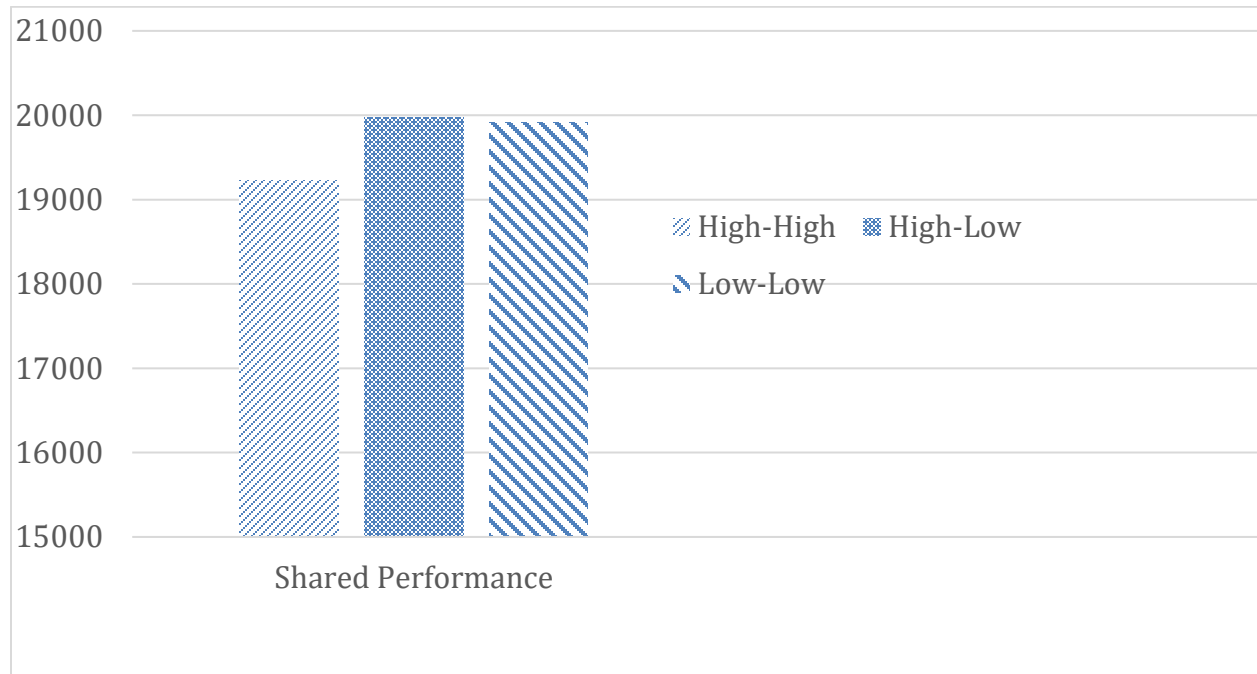


Diagram 3
Status dyads' performance in competitive situations



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Appendix A

Essay 2 – Measurement Scales

Social Dominance Orientation Scale (adapted from Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth & Malle, 1994)

1. Some people are simply not the equals of others.
2. It is important that we treat others as equals.
3. Some people are just more worthy than others.
4. To get ahead in life, it is sometimes necessary to step on others.
5. Some people are more deserving than others.
6. If people were treated more equally we would have fewer problems.
7. In an ideal world, all people would be equal.
8. Some people are just not as good as others.

All items were measured on a *very negative* (1) to *very positive* (7) scale; items 2, 6-7 were reverse coded.

Original Social Dominance Orientation Scale (Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth & Malle, 1994) (not used in this study)

1. Some groups of people are simply not the equals of others.
2. Some people are just more worthy than others.
3. This country would be better off if we cared less about how equal all people were.
4. Some people are just more deserving than others.
5. It is not a problem if some people have more of a chance in life than others.
6. Some people are just inferior to others.
7. To get ahead in life, it is sometimes necessary to step on others.
8. Increased economic equality.
9. Increased social equality.
10. Equality.
11. If people were treated more equally we would have fewer problems in this country.
12. In an ideal world, all nations would be equal.
13. We should try to treat one another as equals as much as possible.
14. It is important that we treat other countries as equals.

All items are measured on a *very negative* (1) to *very positive* (7) scale. Items 8-14 are reverse-coded.

Appendix B

Competence/Warmth Behaviors Scale

(adapted from Fiske, Cuddy, Glick & Xu, 2002)

1. Act as a mentor who supports the development of your colleagues.
2. Contribute to the company culture by contributing to a positive environment.
3. Focus on building relationships with your supervisor/co-workers.
4. Volunteer to serve on committees for employee interest groups.
5. Host or coordinate gatherings outside of work to foster relationships with co-workers.
6. Display awards you have won for your task accomplishments on your desk.
7. Work to solve a tough problem at work even though you were not expected to.
8. Make sure you appear to be an independent worker that needs little help from others.
9. Demonstrate your aptitude at taking the initiative and being a self-starter.
10. Keep track of how the work you contribute to the company is quantifiable (e.g., added revenue or sales numbers).
11. Make sure that you do a better job than everyone else.

Items 1-5 are warmth behaviors, items 6-11 competence behaviors.

Original Competence/Warmth Behaviors Scale

(Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002)

1. Volunteer outside your working hours to help your co-workers with their personal issues.
2. Use your personal time to help a coworker outside of working hours.
3. Congratulate the winner of 'best office employee' award.
4. Stay late at an office party even when you think everyone is pretty shallow.
5. Work late to be sure you did the best job possible on a work assignment.
6. Display awards you have won for your task accomplishments on your desk so your supervisor will see them.
7. Work to solve a tough problem at work even though you were not expected to.
8. Make sure that you appear secure and able to answer questions in a coherent way when called upon by your boss.

Items 1-4 are warmth behaviors, items 5-8 competence behaviors.

Appendix C

Essay 2 – Cover Letters

Condition 1: High Competence/Low Warmth

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing because I am interested in applying for this job position. To assure you that I will perform well in this role, I would like to share some information about myself. As a leader, I pride myself in delivering superior work with minimal guidance or direction. My high level of expertise allows me to work independently and deliver results, by any means necessary. Performance is the key to business. I do not let other people slow me down and I am motivated to perform better than those around me.

These qualities make me the perfect candidate for this position. I look forward to hearing from you in the future.

Condition 2: High Warmth/Low Competence

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing because I am interested in applying for a job position. To assure you that I will perform well in this role, I would like to share some information about myself.

As a leader, I focus on developing the skills and talents of others. I am passionate about bringing out the best in my colleagues and helping them perform to their fullest potential. I have learned that relationships are the key to business. My track record of success comes from inspiring trust, excitement, and enthusiasm in the people around me.

These qualities make me the perfect candidate for your position. I look forward to hearing from you.

Condition 3: High Warmth/High Competence

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing because I am interested in applying for a job position. In order to assure you that I will perform well in this role, I would like to share some information about myself.

As a leader, I pride myself in delivering superior work with minimal guidance or direction and I also excel at developing the skills and talents of others. My high level of expertise allows me to work independently and deliver results, by any means necessary. I do not let other people slow me down and I am motivated to perform better than those around me. My track record of success comes from inspiring trust, excitement, and enthusiasm in the people around me.

These qualities make me the perfect candidate for your position. I look forward to hearing from you.

Condition 4: Low Warmth/Low Competence

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing because I am interested in applying for a job position. In order to assure you that I will perform well in this role, I would like to share some information about myself.

I am excited for the opportunity to get leadership training at your company. One day, I would like to gain the skills required to work independently. I think that eventually I might be able to gain experience and learn how to excel in these areas.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Appendix D Performance Evaluations

Condition 1: High Competence/Low Warmth

Annual Performance Appraisal

Employee Evaluated: S. Anderson, Associate, Strategy Division

Evaluated By: M. Nelson, Senior Associate, Strategy Division

Use the following scale to rate this employee's performance on each of the dimensions listed below relative to his or her peers. Your ratings should reflect the employee's performance over the last year.

Poor	Below Average	Average	Above Average	Excellent
1	2	3	4	5

1. Secures relevant information and identifies possible causes of problems.	[1]	[2]	[X]	[4]	[5]
2. Makes decisions based on logical assumptions.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[X]	[5]
3. Is a self-starter who actively attempts to influence events and achieve goals.	[1]	[2]	[X]	[4]	[5]
4. Demonstrates the ability and willingness to express opposing viewpoints tactfully.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[X]	[5]
5. Uses appropriate interpersonal styles in interacting with coworkers.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[X]
6. Is respectful when interacting with subordinates.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[X]	[5]

I have given an honest and accurate assessment of this employee's performance over the past year to the best of my ability.

Signature of Evaluator: M. K. Nelson **Date:** 9/1/16

Condition 2: High Warmth/Low Competence

Annual Performance Appraisal

Employee Evaluated: S. Anderson, Associate, Strategy Division

Evaluated By: M. Nelson, Senior Associate, Strategy Division

Use the following scale to rate this employee's performance on each of the dimensions listed below relative to his or her peers. Your ratings should reflect the employee's performance over the last year.

Poor	Below Average	Average	Above Average	Excellent
1	2	3	4	5

1. Secures relevant information and identifies possible causes of problems.	[1]	[2]	[X]	[4]	[5]
2. Makes decisions based on logical assumptions.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[X]	[5]
3. Is a self-starter who actively attempts to influence events and achieve goals.	[1]	[2]	[X]	[4]	[5]
4. Demonstrates the ability and willingness to express opposing viewpoints tactfully.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[X]	[5]
5. Uses appropriate interpersonal styles in interacting with coworkers.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[X]
6. Is respectful when interacting with subordinates.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[X]	[5]

I have given an honest and accurate assessment of this employee's performance over the past year to the best of my ability.

Signature of Evaluator: M. K. Nelson **Date:** 9/1/16

Condition 3: High Competence/High Warmth

Annual Performance Appraisal

Employee Evaluated: S. Anderson, Associate, Strategy Division

Evaluated By: M. Nelson, Senior Associate, Strategy Division

Use the following scale to rate this employee's performance on each of the dimensions listed below relative to his or her peers. Your ratings should reflect the employee's performance over the last year.

Poor	Below Average	Average	Above Average	Excellent
1	2	3	4	5

1. Secures relevant information and identifies possible causes of problems.	[1]	[2]	[X]	[4]	[5]
2. Makes decisions based on logical assumptions.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[X]	[5]
3. Is a self-starter who actively attempts to influence events and achieve goals.	[1]	[2]	[X]	[4]	[5]
4. Demonstrates the ability and willingness to express opposing viewpoints tactfully.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[X]	[5]
5. Uses appropriate interpersonal styles in interacting with coworkers.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[X]
6. Is respectful when interacting with subordinates.	[1]	[2]	[3]	[X]	[5]

I have given an honest and accurate assessment of this employee's performance over the past year to the best of my ability.

Signature of Evaluator: M. K. Nelson **Date:** 9/1/16

Condition 4: Low Competence/Low Warmth

Annual Performance Appraisal

Employee Evaluated: S. Anderson, Associate, Strategy Division

Evaluated By: M. Nelson, Senior Associate, Strategy Division

Use the following scale to rate this employee's performance on each of the dimensions listed below relative to his or her peers. Your ratings should reflect the employee's performance over the last year.

Poor	Below Average	Average	Above Average	Excellent
1	2	3	4	5

1. Secures relevant information and identifies possible causes of problems.	[1]	[X]	[3]	[4]	[5]
2. Makes decisions based on logical assumptions.	[1]	[X]	[3]	[4]	[5]
3. Is a self-starter who actively attempts to influence events and achieve goals.	[1]	[2]	[X]	[4]	[5]
4. Demonstrates the ability and willingness to express opposing viewpoints tactfully.	[1]	[X]	[3]	[4]	[5]
5. Uses appropriate interpersonal styles in interacting with coworkers.	[1]	[X]	[3]	[4]	[5]
6. Is respectful when interacting with subordinates.	[1]	[2]	[X]	[4]	[5]

I have given an honest and accurate assessment of this employee's performance over the past year to the best of my ability.

Signature of Evaluator: M. K. Nelson **Date:** 9/1/16

Appendix E: Essay 3 - Status Negotiations Materials

NEGOTIATOR INSTRUCTIONS: PINNACLE SERVICES INCORPORATED

In this study, you will be role playing a negotiation against another person. You will be playing the role of an executive at Pinnacle Services Incorporated. Your company has recently agreed to a merger with Mountain Enterprises. One of the important tasks that needs to be done in a corporate merger is to make a variety of human resource management and compensation decisions in order to make the salaries, bonuses, vacation packages, and other benefits that are offered by the two companies consistent. This is the task you will be performing in this study. You will meet with an executive from Mountain to negotiate these issues. You will be in the role of the executive from Pinnacle; the other negotiator will be in the role of the executive from Mountain.

There are 7 issues of concern in this negotiation:

- Signing Bonus
- Vacation Time
- Starting Date For New College Graduates
- Moving Expense Coverage
- Insurance Coverage
- Salary
- Training Center Location

Your goal is to reach a settlement with the Mountain negotiator on all seven issues that is in the best interests of the merged company. But, as the agent for Pinnacle, **THE MORE POINTS YOU EARN, THE BETTER**. This is consistent with what you would expect when two companies combine into one company. You may determine what type of agreement is best for you by referring to the "PAYOFF SCHEDULE" on the next page.

The 7 issues are listed separately. Along the left-hand side under each issue are five different settlement points for each issue. The number of points you will receive for each type of agreement are shown in the column to the right. As a negotiator, you need to settle each issue, though you can do so at any of the five levels on each issue. Thus there is a huge number of possible agreements.

You should note that each issue has a different degree of importance to you, as indicated by the number of points you could gain on each issue.

DO NOT AT ANY TIME TELL THE OTHER PERSON HOW MANY POINTS YOU ARE GETTING. ALSO, DO NOT LET THE OTHER NEGOTIATOR SEE YOUR POINT SCHEDULE. THIS INFORMATION IS FOR YOU ONLY.

Please become very familiar with your PAYOFF schedule. The highest number of total points you can obtain from this negotiation is 19,200 and the lowest number is zero.

	<u>Lowest</u>	<u>Highest</u>
Signing Bonus	0	1600
Vacation Time	0	4000
Starting Date For College Grads	0	2400
Moving Expense Covered	0	800
Insurance Covered	0	3200
Salary	0	6000
Training Center Location	<u>0</u>	<u>1200</u>
Total	0	19,200

DO NOT LET THE MOUNTAIN NEGOTIATOR SEE YOUR PAYOFF SCHEDULE

Your payoffs for each issue appear on the next two pages.

Pinnacle Payoff Schedule

<u>Signing Bonus</u>	<u>Points</u>
10%	1600
8%	1200
6%	800
4%	400
2%	0

<u>Vacation Time</u>	<u>Points</u>
25 days	4000
20 days	3000
15 days	2000
10 days	1000
5 days	0

<u>Starting Date For College Graduates</u>	<u>Points</u>
June 1	2400
June 15	1800
July 1	1200
July 15	600
August 1	0

<u>Moving Expense Coverage</u>	<u>Points</u>
100%	800
90%	600
80%	400
70%	200
60%	0

<u>Insurance Coverage</u>	<u>Points</u>
Plan A	3200
Plan B	2400
Plan C	1600
Plan D	800
Plan E	0

Pinnacle Payoff Schedule (Continued)

<u>Salary</u>	<u>Points</u>
\$50,000	6000
\$48,000	4500
\$46,000	3000
\$44,000	1500
\$42,000	0

<u>Training Center Location</u>	<u>Points</u>
Boston	0
New York	300
Chicago	600
Los Angeles	900
San Francisco	1200

DO NOT LET THE MOUNTAIN NEGOTIATOR SEE YOUR PAYOFF SCHEDULE

PINNACLE NEGOTIATION POINTS:

Below are some reasons Pinnacle has for why they prefer various settlements. We offer these to help you determine arguments you may want to use in your discussions with Mountain for why you prefer the settlement positions that you do. Feel free to bring up these arguments (or to ignore these arguments) in your discussions with Mountain. Also, we encourage you to think of additional reasons why you prefer the outcomes that you do.

SIGNING BONUS

Pinnacle has historically given out signing bonuses as a way of “sweetening the pot” for new employees. Signing bonuses are attractive because they provide needed up front money to new employees, but they do not add to long term costs because they are only paid to an employee once. In contrast, Mountain does not even offer their employees signing bonuses (!), in spite of the fact that 80% of companies now offer new employees signing bonuses. You are convinced that signing bonuses are a big recruiting asset and you would like to see the merged company institute them at a generous level (say, 10%).

Reasons that you might use to persuade Mountain to offer large signing bonuses include the following:

1. Other companies offer lucrative signing bonuses.
2. They help new employees cover initial expenses.
3. Prior Pinnacle employees have received them, and new hires at Mountain who hear that former Pinnacle employees used to get signing bonuses might feel upset.

VACATION TIME FOR NEW HIRES

Pinnacle employees have always received generous amounts of vacation time (25 days, in other words, five weeks). In fact, it will be difficult for former Pinnacle employees to accept reductions in their vacation time now that they work for the merged company. Therefore, you would really like to see a change in policies to provide more vacation time for all employees. Some arguments you can make for keeping vacation time at high levels are:

1. Employees will be able to perform better if offered sufficient time to rest.
2. Employees really care about work/family life balance these days, and giving employees time off to spend time with their family will be perceived as a valuable reward by employees.
3. Some other forward-thinking companies offer 25 days.
4. Employees can use part of their vacation time to go through some training and development programs at local colleges and universities.

STARTING DATE FOR NEW COLLEGE GRADUATES

Pinnacle has always started college students as soon as possible, usually with a June 1st starting date. There are several reasons that you would like to see new graduates start on an early date:

1. The summer months tend to be less busy. This gives the new hires a chance to get used to work at a relatively less frantic pace. Employees who are around in the summer also have more time to help new employees because they too are less busy.
2. New hires can help cover the jobs performed by other employees as June begins the peak vacation period and they can cover these responsibilities.
3. Many college students like starting early so they can begin paying off their loans; others have no desire to waste the first two months after graduation doing nothing.

MOVING EXPENSE COVERAGE

Pinnacle was always generous with moving expenses, covering 100% of the expenses. You would like to see the merged company offer 100% coverage, as this is consistent with Pinnacle corporate philosophy of treating new employees as well as possible (you feel that the early days of an employee's career with the company are a good predictor of whether they are happy with the company long term, so whatever you can do to make the early days go as smoothly as possible is good). Some arguments you can make for 100% coverage:

1. New hires have just graduated from college and will not be able to pay for moving expenses – they need 100% coverage.
2. For many people it will be a long move and would be very expensive.
3. Many other companies offer 100%.
4. If bonuses are low AND we give only partial moving coverage, it is difficult for new hires to manage their expenses.
5. Many new hires have just spent a fortune on their education and cannot afford another bill.

INSURANCE COVERAGE

Plan E is the current coverage level Mountain employees have. It covers basic health issues but does not cover the cost of prescriptions, dental, eye, or mental health visits. Pinnacle's health coverage was also with a plan much like Plan E. However, you would like to see the new merged company provide as comprehensive a coverage plan as possible. In fact, the more comprehensive, the better, as this might make former Pinnacle employees feel better about working in the new merged company.

Benefits of the other plans beyond Plan E:

Plan D: Adds eye coverage

Plan C: Adds eye and dental coverage

Plan B: Adds eye, dental, and mental health coverage

Plan A: Adds eye, dental and mental health coverage, plus covers prescriptions with a \$10 copay by the employee.

SALARY

Not surprisingly, an important issue to be determined is what the salary level of entry level employees will be. At Pinnacle, the starting salaries were around \$50,000 and you don't see any reason why the merged company should reduce that level of compensation for new hires. Higher salaries would allow employees to attend evening classes in advanced programs at local universities, further developing their skills.

TRAINING CENTER LOCATION

New Pinnacle employees (who are largely in the Western U.S.) begin by receiving two months of training in San Francisco. New employees hired by Mountain receive some amount of training (you aren't sure how much) at the Mountain company training center, located in New York. If Mountain's training center becomes the training center for the merged company, it would be a burden on former Pinnacle employees and their families if they have to be trained so far away for two months. It would be great if they could be trained in a closer location. You are unsure what will happen to the Pinnacle training center (one rumor is that it will be put up for sale). So, while not a critical issue (it only affects employees for a short time), you would be pleased if the training center for the merged company could be located out west.

Important information for the Pinnacle Representatives:

Since your company is undergoing a merger, only one person can serve as Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO). If you win this negotiation, you will be the newest CHRO. However, if you lose by scoring fewer points than your partner, they will win CHRO and you will report to them from now on.